

heart attack

#38

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the
education
issue

countdown
to putsch

guyana
punch
line

stonehenge
records

[LOGIC]



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heartattack

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EDUCATION



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Literacy for Empowerment: Teaching Community Based Adult Education

I always thought I would be a grade school or high school English/literature teacher because those were the teachers that affected me most in the town where I grew up. Books and the teachers who loved them showed me a world beyond my daily existence in a post industrial town in southern Illinois. When I moved to Chicago, I began tutoring and subbing in a very under-resourced inner-city grade school. Through an amazing five years of tutoring I realized I didn't want to be a teacher. I wanted to act as a true student advocate/tutor, rejecting the role of authority I saw in the classroom. It seemed to me teaching people who are forced by the state to be in an educational facility would lead to an extraordinary amount of classroom management and discipline, not to mention the administrative b.s. (which I definitely encountered by school administration while subbing). Even though I had first envisioned myself working with kids I found myself in a different kind of classroom. Through working with a few different non-profits in Chicago I fell into another field of education, adult education.

This prospect seemed exciting and scary. I constantly question myself and my role. Wait a minute, am I even an adult? How am I going to teach adults when I feel a lot like a kid and most of my experience is with the young'uns? Do I know enough to explain a grammar that I was brought up speaking? How will people respond to learning English from a young white gringa? Despite all these lingering questions and doubts, I am constantly discovering why teaching adults is one of the raddest activities I've ever been involved with.

I've been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adults for the past three years in community based organizations. Currently I teach low-intermediate ESL to mainly Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico. The classes are free so if the learners are there they want to be there—no coercion here. I feel that community based ESL offers an environment where we can value all languages (we also offer First Language Literacy classes in Spanish) and not privilege English but realize its usefulness in opening up opportunities for many low income immigrant families. My current class is still learning basic survival English but all can carry on some conversation. As a part of our student-centered, real life skills curriculum, we have great conversations about everything from current topics like the war in Iraq to the needs of the community (such as driver's licenses for the undocumented) to language questions such as the difference between "kick my ass" and "kiss my ass." Barrels of fun!

I just went to my first conference for teachers of ESL and discovered just how many areas of this field exists (and this experience definitely reaffirmed where I'm situated within it). There's teaching to speakers of other languages in elementary or middle school, teaching university level speakers of other languages, teaching English as a foreign language abroad (to those who can afford it, usually

university and business folk) and finally community based ESL, which is what I do. I did not encounter a lot of people who shared my beliefs at this conference so I wasn't surprised when one presenter called the sponsoring organization conservative. However, there is a radical history to adult education that many of today's teachers may have forgotten.

Current community based adult education theory and practice pulls a lot of influence from Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. Freire described the possibility of teaching literacy for empowerment through "popular education" or education for freedom in his well-known book Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This book expresses the need for teaching and learning literacy to be seen as a political act. When people gain literacy skills, they in turn gain agency in a world which wants them to remain without agency or powerless. Popular education is an instrument of liberation in a world of the "haves" and "have nots". The ideas that come from Freire break down the traditional authoritarian dichotomy of all-knowing teacher and students as receptacles for information. Freire calls this the banking style of education. Here are some traits of banking education from Pedagogy of the Oppressed:

- (a) the teacher knows and the students are taught;
- (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice and the students comply;
- (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) the teacher chooses the program content and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) the teacher confuses authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

The above beliefs, which many teachers practice, work against empowering individuals to be critically thinking, conscious participants in the community. Now, most of us were taught under the banking style of learning so as teachers we need to consciously fight against falling into these roles we've been socialized and taught. It's not that easy. At times I find myself doing most of the talking in the classroom. I find the easiest way to fight against these socialized norms is to become a reflective teacher. I try to keep a teaching journal which I write in after the students leave the room. In the journal I can critique myself and come up with a better more empowering way to facilitate learning. Collaborating with understanding and like-minded co-workers helps a lot. I always feel I have someone I can talk to about teaching practices and classroom ideas.

I feel like for once my job falls in line with my punk ideals. The concept of DIY is a huge part of my classroom. Studies have shown that humans learn by doing not by listening or watching. I love being a part of a participatory and active classroom. When students are working

with partners, small groups or running around trying to gather information I sometimes feel like I'm not even working! But these are the classes that students get the most out of. One way our class tries to work towards a liberatory education is through a project we call Language Exchange. Each week we invite native English speakers from the community center who would like to practice their Spanish to join us for an hour (half an hour practicing English conversation and half an hour teaching Spanish language and conversation). Everyone has something to teach and learn from each other. It's like a DIY skillshare with language!

There are other times when my punk identity can lead to funny conversations. For example, it's always interesting to get student responses to my veganism or explanations on why I have an awesome facial wound from smashing the microphone in my own face the weekend before. A former class of mine lived in a neighborhood with a venue that held larger punk/alternative events and would always refer to the gente loca with the purple hair and multiple piercings and tattoos. To introduce the idea of punk beyond these superficial generalizations, I've also shown parts of Martin Sorrondeguy's documentary Beyond the Screams/Mas Alla de los Gritos: A U.S. Latino/Chicano Hardcore Punk Documentary during the class break. It elicited great questions and stories about creating a culture of resistance in a classroom filled with immigrant mothers, fathers and laborers.

There are a lot of great resources out there about community based adult education. I will list a couple of my favorites at the end. It goes without saying that I recommend anything by Freire. The autobiography of Myles Horton, the founder of the Highlander Folk school (a community resource and learning center in the South which housed many organizers of the Civil Rights movement) is a great story of the founding of a major catalyst for social change that continues to inspire me as a teacher. I feel like there's so much more to say about teaching English and adult education. The conference I attended made me realize that the majority of ESL teachers are older European-American women who at many of the sessions I attended seemed out of touch with the idea of education for liberation and the on-going war against immigrants in this country (and more interested in getting the complimentary canvas bags provided by the organizers). We need more critically conscious people in this field! I can't emphasize enough how much I learn everyday. It seems our culture gives up on adults and focuses on the cliché of the children as our future (like Bush's No Child Left Behind Act). Empowering kids and creating opportunities for the youth is always needed, but adults have just as much capacity to create a better world. Maybe you have questions or maybe you also teach in a language classroom and want to communicate. I'd love to hear from you. Thanks to all the teachers out there who are giving it all they've got day after day.

Megan/PO Box 5027/Chicago, IL 60680; chicapalta@hotmail.com
Some Resources in community based ESL/Adult Education:
Brookfield, Stephen. Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher.

Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Education for Critical Consciousness. Pedagogy of Hope. Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage.

Hooks, Bell. Teaching to Transgress.

Horton, Myles with Judith Kohl & Herbert Kohl. The Long Haul: An Autobiography.

<http://www.cal.org.ncle> National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (offers more than 60 articles about teaching ESL to adults in the U.S.)

Daryl Vocat

Thoughts on learning and teaching.

In the last couple of years I have wound up doing a number of small-ish teaching gigs. It hasn't by any means been full-time and really wasn't something I had ever thought I would do.

I started going taking art classes at university because it seemed like the only logical thing for me to take. No one really talked to me about the purpose of a degree programme or even what a degree programme was. I just knew I liked making things and seemed to be reasonably good at it. Eventually people started to expect me to take certain classes in order to fulfill degree requirements. I never really questioned any of this since I mostly enjoyed my classes.

In "practical" terms I found art school to be pretty useless since there was no real information on how to live in the world as an artist. Nothing about approaching galleries, about selling work, having dealers, applying for grants or anything really. Most of my classes were a bit like play time for me. We were always encouraged to experiment with different things and had a few technical hints thrown in here and there. Going to art school was really valuable to my growth as a person. It was really reassuring to work with a community of artists in a creative environment and not having to try and justify the value of art to people who didn't seem to get it.

As my undergraduate degree came closer to being finished one prof I worked quite closely with began to suggest I go to grad school. He was very encouraging of the work I made and told me that grad school would be really good for my development as an artist. I guess that was enough information to convince me to look into it since I was soon applying to a few different schools. If nothing else, grad school seemed like a great excuse to get away from my parents.

Out of three schools I got into one and jumped at the opportunity to move here to Toronto. Shortly after I got accepted to school I found out I was going to be a Teaching Assistant. Upon getting to school I realized that being a TA could mean a lot of different things depending on who I was working with. All of the other people in my programme were in a similar position as me with regard to teaching. None of us had any previous experience and weren't really sure how everything would work out in the end. We were all quite nervous about teaching, but were assured that we would have training prior to classes. To my dismay, most of the training sessions we had were completely inapplicable to teaching visual arts classes or doing studio demonstrations. All of the instructional sessions we wound up in were quite general and talked a lot about marking essays and how to approach humanities classes. This was good if we were going to be leading

discussions on a novel, but didn't help me to figure out how to mark someone's art or run a critique, or even really an effective way to keep people's attention.

By the time classes started I didn't actually feel any more prepared than I did before our "training" began. Lucky for me, I had some help from a very experienced studio assistant during the first few classes. I was really shocked that people were so willing to throw us in front of a class with so little support. I felt as though this went against a lot of the things I thought teaching was supposed to be about. I always thought teaching needed a lot of work, a lot of dedication and a lot of study. Maybe it was assumed we had all of these skills already though. From my grad school experience I found out that more or less anyone can teach if they are thrown into it. Unfortunately, being in front of a class doesn't ensure anyone you are a good teacher.

When I taught my university classes I was always aware to ask the students what they wanted from the class or to let me know if something wasn't working. I would also continually ask if things made sense or were clear to my students. Overwhelmingly the response to ANY question I asked my classes was silence. Nothing. I really had to prod in order to get any kind of response from them. Such reactions really made me wonder about my effectiveness as a teacher. Then I started to talk to other people about their classes and everyone seemed to have the same experience. It didn't make sense that all of us were poor teachers, but it also seemed odd that students seemed so disinterested.

Most of the people in my programme were teaching introductory courses which meant that most of the students were right out of high school. It seemed as though these people came from a place that didn't welcome questions, a place where they did what they were told and were after marks rather than real learning. When I had older or more experienced students they were generally more likely to ask questions and engage in dialogue about the work we were doing than the younger or more inexperienced ones.

When I taught a theory class and had to mark papers people's inexperience showed through more than ever. Most of my students, again fresh out of high school, had no real idea how to write an essay, how to engage in critical discussion or how to use grammar. This really made me feel like I had no clue what I was doing and made me feel like I was an awful teacher. When people didn't "get" what I was going over in class I felt like a failure as a teacher. I really didn't have anything to dispute this feeling since the students were not willing to give feedback on how I taught or how the class was run.

I just finished teaching another class at a local art studio that in some ways left me with a similar feeling of failure. It was a small class and the attendance was low. I couldn't seem to shake the feeling that the low attendance was from my poor teaching ability even though the students who attended regularly assured me it wasn't. The people who were at the class seemed quite interested in learning and experimenting with new techniques which was great for me. From experience I have found that having people engaged in their work and being inquisitive makes teaching worthwhile and makes me feel like I am

being understood. When people seem to be paying attention and genuinely interested I feel as though I have been successful and am encouraged to keep teaching, but when things seem to go wrong I tend to feel humiliated and like my students will find out that I don't know what I'm doing.

Through all of this I seem to have lost the ability to determine any real way to evaluate my teaching skills. Since I have wound up teaching a number of classes it appears that some people believe in my skills, but at the same time I feel like studying teaching would be a great asset to me. I don't really know how much of these feelings come from lack of experience as a teacher, poor self-esteem or just plain old not having any answers.

As I mentioned before, I never had any real intention of becoming a teacher. I always knew I wanted to "be an artist," but that desire always seemed to be completely aside from any "career" that makes money. That's one thing I quite like about art, but unfortunately we live in a society where pretty much everything is based on capital. As a result, a lot of artists wind up teaching as a way to live. This really makes me question the value of art. I mean is the only practical application of our skills to teach other people those same skills? I sure hope not.

I have seen a lot of university art teachers who hardly make any art since their teaching has taken over their lives. This is a big problem since I feel that being a productive artist is really valuable as an art teacher. If you aren't productive yourself you will not be able to motivate anyone to make art or to take it seriously. As we get tired of poverty and instability we look for sustainable jobs and our art takes on a secondary role in our lives. Combine full-time jobs, with family and there isn't time for much else. It's frustrating to see art and academia get so tangled up together. While there are obvious assets in taking art classes, I have always thought that art was not about rules. I guess in a sense I liken making art to making 'zines or having a punk band, it's something basically everyone can do, but that doesn't always mean everyone *should* do it. The very same thing that makes art exciting and important also makes it problematic. And just as there are bad bands and 'zines there is bad art.

While I do find teaching to be an interesting challenge and often a noble pursuit sometimes it's little more than a way to make rent. I often wonder if I have the level of commitment I need to be a good teacher, to take my abilities to the next level and to learn more actual teaching skills. It's a difficult balance because both teaching art and making art require a great deal of commitment. Despite the fact that all of the people in my grad school class were thrown into the classroom as teachers I maintain that not all of us *should* have been. Maybe I won't ever know if I was one of the people who shouldn't have been, maybe I won't let myself know. What I do know though, is that more than anything teaching has helped me learn a lot about myself. The thing I have found most rewarding about teaching art classes is seeing just how much I have learned from my students. I feel as much like a student as I do a teacher when I'm in the classroom and I think that's good since we all have so much to

learn from each other.

I'm not sure if anyone out there is in the same boat, or teaches art, but if you are, I'd sure love to hear from you and talk about your experiences.

Thanks.

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Marty Roberts

I am 28 years old and I have these dreams. I see my neighbors tread more lightly on this fragile earth. People are as concerned for others as they are themselves. Citizenship means more than just

in, and creating equitable, sustainable schools that give students access to democratic life IS the place I feel myself needing to be. Language is the currency of power in this country, and to neglect the literacy needs of students is to commit educational malpractice. James Baldwin once said, "Without the word, we are imprisoned. With the word, we are set free." No matter how persistent it has been in our history, illiteracy is not inevitable.

And yet my school doesn't see it that way. Only half of those students who start the 9th grade end up graduating, and failure must after all boil down to "student apathy." The school continues to live under the delusion that there are

still have a system that socially promotes second, third, or fourth grade readers well into high school. As a teacher of a second language, reading, and literature, these are the realities of teaching in a low-income, low-performing Californian school. Unfortunately, my school is more the rule than the exception.

...on a Hyperstation...

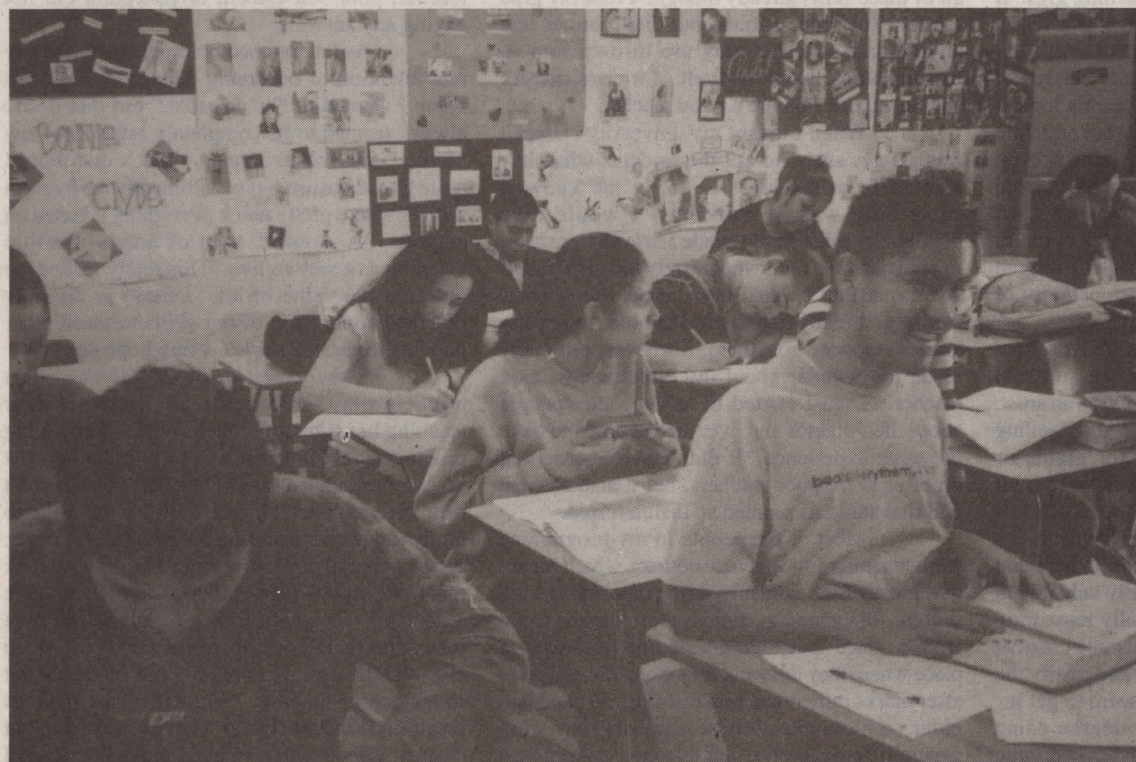
In the early years of schooling, a person learns the basic sounds, symbols, intonations, and process of *learning to read*. From fourth grade on, a child then *reads to learn*. The emphasis of the classroom moves to reading for content. Stories become more complex and history and science reading gains more depth. If a student

has her education derailed by weak instruction at this critical stage, students are continuously behind in their comprehension of the written word put before them. In teaching circles this is known as "The Matthew Effect"—the reading rich get richer, while the reading poor get poorer. For those in my community, mainly US-born Latinos whose parents are predominantly from the state of Michoacan, Mexico, children becomes functionally illiterate in both their first and second language. This is a unique population of in that they have high oral fluency (they sound like native speakers of both languages) but have poor reading comprehension, both in Spanish and English.

Here's an illustration of the breadth of experience I've encountered in my classroom. Last spring, as I began a unit on poetry, one kid recited the baseball ode "Casey at Bat." Just minutes later another kid asked how to write the capital letter K. Still another girl was heard making a post-lunch commentary with the insightful, but grammatically puzzling comment, "There's so not any ranch dressing in the salad bar!" Add to this the image of a chubby Filipino boy, festooned in the latest hip hop gear, sporting a "corn row" hairdo ala Allen Iverson, beat-boxing and channeling Nas with the line, "I rock more heads than those niggas on the slaveships." Contemplating the spheres of linguistic, racial, and teen cultures they negotiate *daily* is enough to

make your head spin. For me, though, these are the most beautiful, engaging, challenging and complex individuals I have ever met. And in a small way, they have all become my children.

Freshmen and are my current favorite. Sure, they have the energy of electrified soap, but



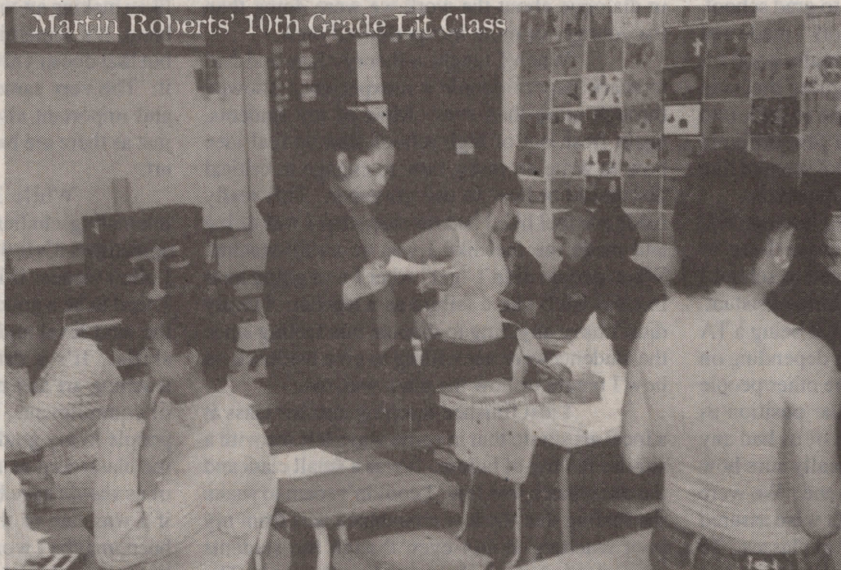
the right to consume. And literacy—the ability to read, write, and speak one's experience of life—is a right, not a privilege. Because of these dreams, and occasionally in spite of them, I teach.

An Anthem in a Vacuum...

Make no mistake; we're in the middle of a new civil rights movement. In the years since "Separate But Equal" schooling was dismantled, this country has neglected to hand over the bricks and mortar of a true democracy to minorities and the poor. The ability to read is the ability to participate and until massive, systemic reform is enacted, American social policy for the poor will continue to be prison and the military.

I missed the march on Washington. I missed Roe vs. Wade. The end of Vietnam marked my birth. You've got to live in the time you live

Martin Roberts' 10th Grade Lit Class



white, English-speaking bodies warming those seats. It's as if, in thirty years, no one has bothered to look up to check for understanding. Beneath this lies the blind and racist assumption that some kids—Latino kids—"just can't learn"? Put the lack of resources aside for the moment, and we

that's part of their charm. They're just so open and malleable. And they're totally transparent in their exploration of the world around them. It's all so totally new to them, and they want part of it all. The ladies develop much quicker than the fellas, and their sophistication shows in the way they carry themselves. My grommets, however, would just as soon be out playing ninjas in the woods. Regardless of their abilities, "Dick and Jane" books just aren't flying with this crowd. Struggling readers in the later grades develop a full complement of coping mechanisms to deal with their shortcomings. More often than not, the troublemakers are those who mask their inadequacies with unruly behavior, taunts, and jeers. If you can build their trust, you find quickly just how much they read the world, and the word, and how they make sense of it all on their own terms.

Each year I begin with a tapestry of rich thematic pieces of reading. Julia Alvarez' "Autobiography of Shehrezad," Judith Ortiz Cofer's "Abuela Invents the Zero," and some very accessible Greek myths provide a scaffold with which I can build confidence, fluency, critical thinking, and close reading. These tales also help create a connection between personal experience—within the community—and the similar experiences of those from radically different cultures. This year I knew I was onto something when Daisy Rangel came in one Monday morning, eager to tell me about her weekend dramas and her latest crush. She also relayed a story of how her aunt had been going through a hard emotional time, and Daisy, never one to miss an opportunity to share her opinion, told her aunt, "Tia, that problem, that's your Achilles heel. That's what's bringing you down." I nearly cried. Another time, as I guided my class through the prejudice and perspective of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Marisa Barajas connected her own life to that of the mixed-race children of Maycomb County. "They're outcast like me. Mexicans won't have me because I don't speak Spanish. Whites won't have me cuz I look Latina." These are the aspects of teaching that break your heart, but also make you endeavor on the behalf of others.

...Daydreaming Days in a Daydream Nation...

I was just another no-future cynic teenager from the 'burbs when it happened. Literally within a month of one another, two slogans from the annals of political rabble rousing arrived in my life. "Destroy Power, Not People!" "All Power to the people!" Each resonated with immediacy and intensity that even the Bones Brigade or Public Enemy couldn't match. Buddhists say that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear, and I guess they're right. These phrases have each influenced me innumerable ways, and it is the latter that I bring to my kids. The fact that I'm an authority figure, revered by parents and the community, doesn't rub me the wrong way. I'm a leader to these kids. I want them to have the ability to read and the confidence to learn. For me this means walking with, not above my pupils, and sharing what I know of the world in an effort to bring greater cultural, economic, and social power to them. For as fundamentally flawed as my current school situation is, I love that I am a teacher, connecting with others in the most powerful of mediums there

is: language.

I'll conclude with one such connection from the early days of my reading class. We had just read *Pandora's Box* and, after all the hate and anger and sorrow had been released into the world, hope emerged. One of my kids raised a hand to say, "That's just like the saying in Spanish, 'la esperanza muere al ultimo. Hope dies last.'"

Much love, friends.

Marty Roberts/330A Trescony/Santa Cruz, CA 95060; mouflon@earthlink.net

Postscript: As my school year draws to a close amidst budget cuts, the imperialist war in Iraq, and violence in our local community, I want to dedicate this article to the thirty 11th grade students of mine who dropped out last year alone. It is also dedicated to the students who chose to escape a small town by joining the armed services.

Greg Knowles

I chose to get a degree in Secondary Education/Spanish so I could have a stable job. I made my decision soon after my 17th birthday. My parents pushed me away from majoring in Communications, so I took a stab at working on what came easiest to learn in high school. I was somewhat introverted and an underachiever, but was working on that as my senior year was coming to an end.

I hadn't been exposed to the hardcore scene at all, but I did have one goal once I hit the campus of Indiana University of Pennsylvania—to get on staff at WIUP-FM. I probably spent as much time working there as I did on my real studies. But that's where I learned to take more chances and prove myself worthy to someone.

Tom Jagger and Chris Subarton—two guys with years of punk under their belts—exposed me to punk beyond the SST offerings in the record library. Tom took me to my first show, got me to buy a copy of MRR, his band's demo, and a Half Life 7". I was then hooked on punk.

I'm glad I was 19 when hardcore kicked its way into my life. It helped me become a little bolder, but there was no reevaluation of priorities or majors, no wasted semesters blowing off classes for road trips to shows, no student loans begging to be paid without a diploma to pay them off. I graduated after four years of good experiences (the first semester can suck it) and went right to work.

And I went straight to hell—mine being Monticello, NY. I took teaching too seriously. No one was having fun in any of my classes. I was making myself sick from the stress by the time I left that town nine months later. The long drives to Woodstock, New Paltz, and ABC No Rio were the high points of that 1990-1991 school year.

I had a whole new set of worries. Was I going to be eaten up by the kids in the next school? Would I even last a year? I was ready to get a Library Science degree after that disastrous first year.

From 1992 to 1995, I bounced through four long-term substitute teaching assignments in three different high schools. I learned to share stories with the classes. I talked about going to shows and finding records. I demonstrated some enthusiasm and got some back in kind. I even went to school unable to speak after my one band

played a weeknight show at ABC No Rio—I even met Chris Jensen that night. I began to feel more confident that I could face a class and win most of them over by making time to talk about stuff while learning all the mechanics of a new language.

Linesville was my first permanent teaching job. I received my permanent teaching certificate (the crucial goal once there) and was the Spanish teacher to kids for seven years. I saw them grow up, get wise, get worse, or stay good. The students would know the routine of a class by the time they made it to their senior year. It was great to be comfortable with the material (5 separate courses), know the kids, and have the flexibility to do things at the drop of a hat. I appreciate the opportunity I had to be a part of a rural school district. I appreciate that much more now that I am part of a suburban school system that is Wal-Mart when compared to Linesville's corner store way of working.

Middle school is okay—I am learning to read the very different personalities that 6th, 7th, and 8th grade have—but the chance to just do things is held off by the need to fill out forms, get signatures, and hope that the 40 minutes don't fly by with us only halfway into the fun.

P.S.: I played some punk in class. Crudos was tough to decipher, but Huasipungo's "Estas Perdido" made 'em react. We even listened to Assfactor 4's "I Reckon" as a side lesson in figuring out where the band is from by the words used in the song. The song usually ended with someone asking, "When does the singing start?"

A *HeartataCk* reviewer mentioned that being a teacher is akin to being a cop, a martyr, or usually both. The same can be said for show promoters, owners of independent stores, 'zine makers, or librarians. Big deal. You know what a teacher provides most? Stability. A face that will be there 180 days a year (give or take a few mental health days). To some, that sounds like their worst nightmare. It sucks to have a teacher you don't like. Some people need a familiar sight to get through the days. When you get waves, honks, and "fuck yous" outside of school, you know that you're part of the community. My seven-year experience at Linesville HS showed me that teachers in it for the long haul end up becoming as vital, and as invisible, as a dam. No one pays much attention to it until it's gone and all hell has broken loose.

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Jonathan Lee

The State of Education in the South:

Tennessee has put the education issue in the back seat, though you wouldn't know it if you didn't pay attention. It's amazing how easy it is for people to miss such a thing. Education seems to be talked about every night on the evening news or everyday in the paper. Stories about the pros and cons and what mayors and representatives are doing about it. But what they are doing about it is often very little and short term.

Tennessee consistently ranks at the bottom of education statistics. Often times in recent memory we've been ranked 50th out of the

50 states in the category. In fact it's Southern states that make up the revolving bottom five in such rankings. And this makes sense. It's Southern states that are the poorest in the United States. With less of a total revenue than bigger commercial centers, there is a small piece of the pie going to education. Often in order to try and start growth, some of the money that should go to education goes to business boosts, which in the long run makes little sense considering who will be working those jobs.

In the case of some states, like Georgia, a state lottery has been started to fund higher education. Any student with a B average out of high school gets a free in-state college education. If there is a surplus from year to year, the money goes to funding area high schools. Memphis recently voted in favor of a state lottery but that just means it can be presented as an issue on the legislative floor. Time will tell if a lottery in support of education will come to be.

The lottery faces heavy religious opposition. In fact at times it's Southern Christian intervention in schools prevents real reform due to a lack of willingness to accept and provoke change. When issues like having the Ten Commandments in school are at the forefront instead of the conditions in which children are or are not learning, there is a huge problem. So in a place where religion enforces policy, it's an unneeded obstacle.

Even though segregation has long been outlawed as policy, it still exists all over the US and definitely in Memphis. Schools in whiter, wealthier areas get larger sums of money, especially from private donations coming from alumni or parents. In poorer areas many times the schools are in worse shape and nearly all minority based. In neighborhoods where jobs are scarce, convenience stores stand instead of grocery stores, and prisons pop up instead of community centers, the schools follow suit. It's an out of sight out of mind policy in urban development.

For instance, in the case of Locke Elementary School, the school teaches a completely African American student base who live at the poverty line or below. One hundred percent of the students receive federally funded school breakfast and lunch. There is only one teacher for every thirty students, not including administration. They have both a corporate sponsor, who provides surface help on things like books, and a church sponsor that helps get clothes to the kids. Many of the parents do not have GEDs and a few are enrolled in the after school GED learning program when not working forty plus hours a week to keep the family's head above water.

Often schools or their districts take on corporate sponsors through things as little as soda vending machines and scoreboards to things as big as building wings and uniforms. Many districts get more than two million dollars of support that is often lost in the central offices and creates little change for the actual schools. But it does benefit the corporate sponsor, who gets cheap and consistent advertising to a constantly growing consumer group.

Just about every school has Channel One, which provides 5 minutes of news with 10 minutes of ads every day that the students are

forced to watch. Instead of being the current events educator it presents itself as, Channel One instead provides updated trends and products for kids to buy into to. The most deadly of school advertisers remains to be the United States Armed Forces. Everything from giving out free folders to co-sponsoring career days to having in school assemblies... the Army tells kids in poor schools that their only option for a steady career or money for college is joining up. And more often than not those are the reasons most new recruits join.

I ride the bus a lot here in Memphis, especially when the weather is too bad to bike or walk in, and I've been noticing a new ad campaign along the interior of most buses. They feature smiling bosses of all colors saying things like, "Thanks for dropping out, that means I get to pay you less." Too bad those ads aren't in the schools.

Dropping out of high school becomes a rational decision for many children for a few reasons. If the drop out is coming from a poor neighborhood and needs to make a contribution to his or her family financially, going to high school with seemingly no hope for going to college doesn't make sense. Being in school separates them from the immediate job market and thus separates them from making money. There is more incentive in making money than just going to school with no hope of advancing.

Schools also push for these sorts of decisions in many ways. High schools in the public system revolve around high stakes testing such as the SAT or ACT or a national/state evaluation test such as the TCAP here in Tennessee. These tests determine how well a school's performance is rated, thus influencing funding, employment, and other things. So students doing the worst on such tests are statistically welcome to drop out of school because that will raise the overall school score. Many teachers are required to teach for these tests, focusing on the statistical quota and students pick up on that. In doing so they learn less overall. Some students learn to take the test and then stop going to school thinking it's unimportant after testing is finished.

There are also occasions where schools even compete with each other to stay open when districts are facing cutbacks or remodeling. Even if all schools do stay open, the worst schools get the least financial attention, the worst teachers, smaller staffs, and reject principles. Then the future classes of kids are stuck in that environment with less of a chance than they deserve. Obviously, this normally happens in poor, inner-city areas that are overwhelmingly lower class and minority based. So in the end, these conditions and policies are extremely racist and classist.

The conditions these kids are facing start before high school though. Grade schools are statistically more underfunded than their high school counterparts. And such lack of funding makes little sense. The basic learning from First to Eighth grade is the most important learning you do your whole life. What you learn then determines how much trouble you'll have with learning the rest of your life.

In Conclusion:

Education is the only form of social mobility for most children in the United States. It provides countless options and influences their lives in sometimes unexplainable ways. Denying

them all the options they deserve is criminal. It limits the options and choices of life.

I'm starting a label called So Much To Give. The first projects I'm doing are benefits for some of the poorest elementary schools in Memphis. Each release will contain writings from the band members on education and possible reform. They include a Yaphet Kotto/Seein Red LP/CD, a Dead City/Funeral Diner LP/CD, and a Countdown to Putsch/Tem Eyos Ki LP/CD. All of these will be available through Ebullition.

It's great to see punk still lending a helping hand and getting active in supporting their communities. Mountain continues to put out benefit comps. The Sea of Steel project Ed Walters is really interesting and exciting. Making releases more than music is more important than I can say.

Side Note:

I wrote a 5 page article on the state of Southern education while I was here at work and the file has disappeared, unrecoverable. I can't express my frustration about this. I almost felt like crying after putting all that effort into something and then for it to be deleted. Sorry I couldn't find the time to do it again.

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Eric Meisberger

People often say that the real world is where you can rest assured that all of your fantasy concepts about progressive politics, race and labor will most assuredly fade away. "That stuff is for college kids." I was amazed to learn that in my experience, dealing with the issues of race and gender rolled along while I was out of school. I was a part of a community that attempts (sometimes more effectively than others) to examine these issues and work towards making progress on them. By progress I mean not harming, treading lightly and certainly examining what privileges we have and how to deal with them... how to reject them or work outside of them. These are important issues that are very closely related to the concepts of pacifism and anti-authoritarianism.

This last January, I went back to school. I decided that I wanted to get a Masters Degree in English. I'm a nerd. I like school, so that part was easy. Also, my current place of employment (a local community college) was getting a little antsy about letting me continue working there without the "proper degree." These two factors made me very excited about the prospect of getting back into school. I applied, was accepted, applied for a Graduate Assistantship in the Women's Studies Program and was awarded that, too. It was all a little overwhelming and exciting. This being a Master's Program in English, I would be taking writing and literature courses. I was very excited about one course in particular. The instructor came highly recommended to me and the subject matter was intriguing: Caribbean Literature. This subject is interesting for a number of reasons, but one that stands out is the examination of race, colonialism and imperialism that has to take place to seriously study this literature. In our brief overview of the history of the Caribbean, it was painfully obvious that the

legacy of colonialism is at the heart of many of the issues brought forth by the authors we discuss.

I have been out of school for five years. In those five years, I have surrounded myself with people that energize me, not run me down. That is not to say that everyone in my circle of friends and family agrees with me on everything, but there can be healthy debate. The people I consider my family (biological and non-biological) are, for the most part, willing to examine issues and are willing to think about how they fit into the picture either as a positive, a negative or a non-entity. This equation became completely out of my hands. I was placed in an environment with people who were very different from the people I would choose to surround myself with.

There is an interesting thing about the great state of Pennsylvania. The state forces public school teachers to further their education by taking classes for a Master's Degree. They have to. It's policy. It's also somewhat absurd. At any rate, I'm stuck with many of the same kind of people that I wanted to get the hell away from. I used to teach in the public schools around here. The subject matter was great. The students were great. The administration, and for the most part, my colleagues, sucked. They were terrible. So now, in this supposed bastion of liberal thinking and academic work, I'm surrounded by the asses that I wanted to get away from.

This situation, however, is fraught with possibilities. Confronting the really shady ideas that people have about race, class and privilege comes about with glaring frequency. Discussing these issues is a weekly occurrence for me. Although many of the people in my program are forced by the state to be there and have no interest in what it is we're actually studying, the very act of being together and discussing these issues is great. It's good to think things through. It's good to work out these ideas and discuss them.

For me, education has always been about that. That's why I got into teaching in the first place. It's also why I went on to teach at the college level. I understand, however, that education is not that for everybody. Especially working at the community college, I get to see a lot of students who either don't want to or are forced to be in college. The only thing worse than being forced to go to high school is being forced to go to college. I try to tell these folks that school is not for everyone. People educate themselves better than most schools every day. The stigma about educating ones self as a negative is ridiculous. It needs to be torn down. Even though it's my bread and butter, I would MUCH rather see a person who hates school get out and do something rewarding with their life and their time.

There are so many options for non-school oriented people. Trade schools, apprentices, working for yourself or organizing are just a few things that people I know have done. I feel very lucky that school has, for the most part, been a positive experience in my life. I hope that it can be for others. Equally, I hope that those that don't like traditional schooling can find something that clicks with them. It's not all about the classroom. Each person needs to figure out what works best individually. Then we can start learning to work together.

Anyone want to talk about dorky lit.

theory? Punk teachers and professors? Wanna talk? How about '94 style hardcore? Morrissey? Or is it A League Soccer, you say? I say GO RIVERHOUNDS! Pittsburgh til I die, Pittsburgh til I die, I know I know I know I'll be Pittsburgh til I die!

Peace

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Casey Boland

The heat filled the room again, and at 8:00 AM that meant a long day of sweat and tears (if not a little blood). Yet I had a solitary reason to rejoice: it was Friday. Indeed, Fridays hadn't held much significance in quite some time. But today it kissed me and bestowed upon me all the joy a young man could ever hope for. How bad could it possibly go? None of the kids seemed all that rotten. I predicted deep bonds and happy moments ahead for us in this classroom. I knew I would evolve into the Teacher Extraordinaire.

9:00-9:30 AM would from then on out be 100 Book Challenge. The kids would go to their group according to color and read together. The yellows were the lowest readers. This meant a kindergarten level. Most second grades probably do not enjoy the pretty yellow basket full of books like ABC and My Name Is... Yet we boasted nearly a dozen yellows, all but one of them boys. Ms. J. said to me, "You will be reading with the lowest yellows." Immediately I had flashbacks of the Practicum. Why God, oh why hadn't I prepared for this moment, even after that horrendous experience? There was no avoiding the matter: I had to step up to bat and swing with all my might.

I sat down with three boys: Lorenzo, Robert and Mark. Ms. J. handed me a blue textbook called Sand Castles to read with them. I opened up the book, and found the first story. I began, "Okay everybody open up to page 3. We're going to read Smokey the Bear." They reluctantly flipped the hardcover. Robert seemed the most enthused. Lorenzo lay his head on his arm. Mark looked perturbed. Something about him struck me as somehow wrong. I wanted to label him a bad kid, a troublemaker—something in his scrunched and scowling face, his worn eyes, his tense disposition, like he was constantly on guard, all of it combined into a kid destined for trouble. I tried to shake off my judgements and begin the reading.

Mark looked around at the other children, working together in groups, unsupervised and independent. He stared at me and asked, a longing in his voice, "Why do all a dem get ta read doze books and we gotta read dis?" I didn't know what to say, so I said the first thing to pop into my consciousness. "Well, um, you'll get to read those books, too. But ya gotta read this first." His frown told me he wasn't buying any of the shit I spilled into his ears. He said, "I wanna read by myself, just like dem." I struggled to justify his presence in this group. "You will. But right now you have to read with us." Part of me wondered how I could possibly tell him the truth: "Listen, according to some tests your teacher gave you last year, you read at this level. That means you do not read as well as your

classmates. No you are not dumb but you aren't exactly Einstein either. With some hard work and good old American grit, you will work your way up to the Reds. Maybe even the Whites!" No teacher would ever speak in that tongue to Mark.

I decided to have each boy read a page. No, this was not proper Balanced Literacy technique. But I panicked. "Lorenzo, why don't you read first." He gave me a sleepy, limp stare, like that of a wounded animal. He said nothing. "C'mon, just that one page." He looked at it, and began to read. He read through it without a mistake. "Alright, Robert how about you read this next one." He smiled and giggled. He pointed at the words and tried to enunciate what he saw, yet the words wouldn't come out right. I realized this method wasn't working and said, "How 'bout all of us read." They yelled, "Yes!" I kept an eye on each as we read. Mark would mouth some ghost words, repeat what we said, and then look away to the kids. Here he was in second grade and illiterate.

After the group plowed through all of three pages, Ms. J. moved the class on to the next activity. "Alright, I want everyone to take out their journals." She provided each student with a notebook the day before. Today they got to draw pictures on the front of it. They went at this with great zeal. Art truly is nirvana for the child. Not one kid in that room denied themselves the joy of creating some image on their notebook. Of course most of what they made was far from being anything remotely resembling a tangible or recognizable form. But they relished grinding their crayons into the cover. Part of the assignment included writing; only a handful pulled themselves away from the art segment of the assignment.

Several kids asked for help during the writing. "Mr. Boman, how do ya spell wif?" Lawrence wondered. I knew I couldn't just tell the boy how to spell the word. I suddenly remembered some of that training. "Sound it out," I said. That phrase would become my mantra. Students would mock me for it. Some hated me. But I, as a teacher who sought to foster independent learning, tried not to spell every word. And Lawrence responded how all of them would: "Aw, c'mon, I can't spell it! You spell it!"

Though it was the second day, the kids treated me like a real teacher. Many more demanded my assistance with their spelling. As I went from desk to desk, careful to crouch down to their level (always smiling), a sensation of pride swelled within me. I felt as if I did good, that I accomplished something being here. Those doubts drifted away and optimism sailed on in.

Then came the bathroom break.

Everyday operated according to a strict schedule. Bathroom break arrived at 10:00AM. Another one occurred at 1:45PM. For various reasons of convenience and order, the primary grade teachers brought their classes down to the bathrooms. Only in cases of extreme, bladder-bursting emergencies would the child be allowed to go alone.

Once down in the basement, I stood outside the boy's room, while Ms. J. stood guard over the girls' room. As soon as the boys sprinted inside, a commotion echoed throughout the entire basement. The boys shrieked and banged on the

stalls. Ms. J. shot me a glance, stating without word: "Get in there and take care of them!" Shit, I thought. I do not want to be an adult. But what choice did I have? I was twice their age after all, and the school wasn't paying me to stand around and let the youth go wild.

I walked into the bathroom. It was a vast, cavernous room, with a long row of urinals to the left of the door, and six stalls to the right. A few sinks hung against two facing walls, with more sinks further to the right, and more urinals at the far end of the room. It struck me as perhaps the biggest, most spacious bathroom I'd been in, rivaling those at 30th Street Station and Penn Station. Since the urinals at the far end were hidden by a wall and stalls, the kids naturally congregated down there for maximum fun and mayhem.

They erupted into a tornado of noise. I looked down there, and saw them peak their heads from behind the wall. I heard them whisper, "Sh-sh! It's Mista Bowman, be quiet." And then they commenced a more virulent storm of racket. I had to do it. I half-heartedly raised my voice: "Hey, you guys gotta be quiet or Ms. Jackson will come in here." They mumbled some "O.K.'s, and then proceeded to rage as if I was not standing a dozen feet away. I recognized that this was my moment to assert authority, to stake my dominance, to dig in my heels and lay down the law. Yet I reneged. I walked back out into the basement. Just then Ms. J. stormed into the bathroom through the door at the far end, "You boys better be quiet! I'm sick of yer talkin'. Hurry up!" She charged out shooting me a cool, mean glance. Fuck, I said to myself. My heart sank. I was not fulfilling my duties as a teacher and she knew it.

As the boys tumbled out, Lawrence soared forwards and hit the floor with a sickening slap. I ran over to him. "Are you alright?" He hopped up as if nothing happened. "Dem boys pushed me! They pushed me! Dey been messin wif me!" "Who was messin' with you?" I asked. He gave me a sheepish grin and chirped, "Dem boys!" With that he sprinted after his alleged attackers and lined up with the rest of the class.

The class stood in two separate lines, though no one seemed to possess the ability to stand straight and quiet. This of course angered Ms. J. "Get into line! Alonzo, get in line. Antoinette, be quiet! Stay in line! Davon, get in line right now and be quiet! Dominique, shut that mouth!" I just stood beside the boy's line, not saying a word, not laying down the law, not doing a damned thing. I wondered if this only furthered Ms. J.'s probable disgust of me.

Just as the boy's pushed and shoved one another, Mr. Jackson walked by. He was the janitor, and took none too kindly to most teachers or me. He walked behind me and faced the disruptive students. He towered over them. He leaned down and barked, "You boys shut up!" They froze. "Get in line. You all disrespectin' yo' teacher! Now if I was yo' teacher, you don't even wanna know what I be doin' to y'all, disrespectin' yo' teacher like dat. You don't even want to know!" He carefully stressed that last sentence. The boys stared at him. "Face forward!" They complied instantaneously. "Now I am sorry about that, Ms. Jackson. But these boys are getting' outta hand and I hate to see 'em

treat cha like that." She nodded and said, "Don't worry about it, don't worry about it. They need a stern hand." I stood there, limp and flaccid. My hands hid inside my pockets. I felt weak as jelly, completely ineffectual and worthless. My face blushed. But instantly we walked up the steps and back to the classroom.

The remainder of the morning proceeded forth as a battle between talking, rowdy students, boys and girls, and Ms. J. doling at discipline and threats of discipline. Dwayne and Shadonna were told to come in during recess. Their voice boxes seemed to have been set to automatic. Chris showed signs of life. He bobbed in his seat, and bellowed. He possessed a startling deep voice for a boy. During more writing I went to a group consisting of Mikal, Yakub, Dominique H., Shadonna, James and Lexus. Mikal noticed my necklace, and asked "Where'd you get that necklace from?" I answered, "I made it." "You made it? No you didn't!" "I sure did." "No you didn't." "I did too make it." I was regressing to their manners of discourse. "Why don't cha make me one too?" For some reason I could not discern, I replied, "Maybe I will. If you do your work." I immediately regretted the thoughtless comment. Dominique H. asked, "What's that in ya back pocket?" "Those are my keys," I answered. I kept my keys on a clip attached to my back pocket. Then she asked, "And what's those things on yo' wrists?" She pointed to metal-beaded necklaces I wrapped around both wrists. "Those are bracelets." She demanded, "Can I have some?" Then Mikal jumped back in, "Hey, you said you was gonna make me a necklace!" The situation grew ugly. I had to engineer some sense of control and order. "Hey, you all have to get back to work. Get busy."

Jasmine called me over. "How do you get cho' hair like dat?" Dominique R. also questions. But I wanted to engender a climate of mutual respect. So I answered, "This is how my hair goes. I get up, take a shower and there it is." They just stared at me, mouths agape. Did they not see white people with straight hair? As I prepared to walk to another group, Jasmine grabbed a handful of my greasy nose and quipped, "You gotta big nose!" I felt violated. And offended. Never had one commented on my nose as being excessively large. Did I indeed possess a prodigious nose, a schnauzer to rival that of Gonzo, that baroque purple Jim Henson-conceived muppet? What the hell was Gonzo anyway??? The child challenged my self-esteem. I tried to shake the comment but it clung like a tick.

Lunch soon came. Ms. J. collapsed into a chair, spent and bitter. "I don't know what to do about these kids." I shrugged. She continued, "I have never had a class like this. They're such talkers! And they don't care. They just don't care. I feel like I'm yelling every other word. It's never been this bad. But, no one seems to be really bad, like violent bad." I concurred. She said, "I'm still keeping an eye on Chris. He's a moody one." We ate, silently. Then she asked, "Did ya drive today?" I wasn't sure why she made this inquiry. Would she ask for ride home? Such a prospect unnerved me. Any relation behind the school grounds was unthinkable. I reluctantly answered in the affirmative. She looked me in the eye and said slowly, "Make sure you have a

Club. They stole my car a couple years ago." This news shocked me. She explained, "My white minivan. They stole it. It was a day after a big snowstorm. As we went down to the bathroom, I noticed that the car was not there. One of my students said he saw some boys from the middle school break in and drive off." I was horrified. She went on, "They broke in with a crowbar and cracked the steering wheel column. The cops found it a few days later. They just went joyriding in it. But that crossing guard was out there, not ten feet away when it happened." I asked, incredulously, "Didn't anybody see anything?" Ms. J. contorted her face. She said, "Nooooooo. No one around here ever sees anything." I knew what she was getting at. She then delivered another bomb. "And then they tried to steal it again! This time I had two Clubs on it. One on the steering wheel, and one that went from the column down to the floor. They kicked at that Club, because it was all bent. But they weren't able to break either of the Clubs off." Either Ms. J. was a salesperson for the Club Corporation, or I worked in a world quite unlike any I had inhabited before. And yes, I Clubbed my car from that day forward because I too drove a minivan. A minivan, I thought. Why would a 12-year-old want to hotwire and joyride a soccer mom vehicle? Perhaps they knew whose car they absconded.

Ms. Fienstien joined us. She went into a monologue about some rabble-rouser in her class. "And you know what I heard him say when I walked into the room?" She leaned over towards me and said, "And remember, I know I'm a middle-aged woman. I'm a mom of college kids." I was unsure what to make of that qualifier. She explained, "The kid says, 'Wo, she's sexy.'" Indeed, I found it rather peculiar a second grader would make such a comment. Ms. Fienstien certainly did not resemble the goddess in the puppy love daydreams of inner-city boys.

Lunch always flew by like a jet. Dwayne showed for detention and Ms. J. had him write "I will not talk during class" for an entire page. Shadonna did not come up and Ms. J. was livid. The afternoon promised to be even noisier than the morning. Neither of us was ready. Would any teacher and their intern be ready?

All this is an excerpt from *I Defy* #11. Out this summer.

Evan Kilgore

I just finished my seventh month of teaching so I'm gonna leave the serious thinking about educational theory and reform to those with a greater depth of knowledge and experience. Instead I'm just going to talk about myself, which may or may not enlighten you and offer some insight into the world of teaching, but it is all I can offer at this point. It is 6pm and I just got home from school after spending several hours preparing for a district walkthrough.

So the topic is punk and education, and I being both a punk and an educator, or a poor imitation of both, feel obliged to mouth off. See, these two things for me are inseparable for various reasons. One, most of what I consider to be my most valuable education came in some form from my involvement in the punk community. Two, I can say with a 99% certainty that if I had never

become involved in punk I would not today be a teacher. It was through reading Chris Jensen's "Motion vs Movement" in these pages, reading Travis Fristoe's many interviews with teachers in *America?* and other 'zines, Mountain's "Education" comp, and the "Critical Pedagogy" comp that I really first began to see teaching as activism, as acting on my beliefs, as a true chance to make and impact, and as punk as fuck. The potential held within an excellent punk teacher is amazing. I currently am not an excellent punk teacher though, so instead I simply feel trapped in the middle of a cruel paradox. When balanced well being punk and teaching are excellent compliments. When struggling to find this balance though, teaching can make you hate punk and punk can make you hate teaching. I currently feel extremely off balance but amazingly optimistic. Let me explain.

"I may be a fool. I may be young. I may fight a battle that can't be won. I may be simplistic. I may be idealistic, but all I know is something must be done... I'm not gonna give up." When I wrote these lines from "Remains to be Seen" by Fuel on my journal last summer, days after finishing a 5 week teacher training bootcamp, I was beginning to understand what I had gotten myself into and felt the need to reexamine my motivation, remind myself of why I was getting into this. I had lost 20 pounds in those weeks because of nervousness, stress, and an almost complete lack of time to eat. I had taught 4 weeks of summer school, attended dozens of workshops, role played how to deal with difficult teachers, parents, students, and administration. I'd spent countless hours trying to get kids to sit in chairs, stop banging heads against walls (theirs and other people's), climb back through the window and get off the roof. I was scared, but more than ever I knew something must be done. The difficult part was that I didn't know if I could do it.

That is still the difficult part. It is why being a punk can make you hate teaching, because to be a good punk teacher, at least for myself, you have to be a great teacher. You essentially have to reinvent the educational system within your own classroom, because the current public educational system isn't one that aligns well with the ideals that are typically extracted from our community. It isn't looking to create independent minds. It isn't looking to shape leaders who will challenge authority. If we had school kids challenging authority all over the place then how could we get them to walk in those nice single file lines! How could we use fear to control them! How could we get them to understand that the Assistant Principal is inherently right because he has the power of district mandates direct from the divine Super-Intendent carved into stone memos. No, it just wouldn't do.

Even worse in the eyes of the public school system than free-thinking students are free-thinking teachers, so we are given check lists, directives, memos, more checklists and memos that supercede previously issued memos and checklists. Then we are threatened with disciplinary action for not following memos we never saw. We are beaten or paperworked into submission, and this is when being a punk makes me hate being a teacher, because I know that what I am asked to give isn't what I want to give. I know that the easy way isn't the right way, but

the text books are easy to fall back on after spending 4 hours after school making sure your classroom aligns with the checklists. The ideals and ideas I carried in in the beginning are lost behind a cloud of frustration and exhaustion, so I begrudgingly fall back on the Eurocentric history text books instead of handing out excerpts from Zinn. So, the self loathing sets in, the punk hating the teacher who is exactly what he didn't want to be. You resent yourself for giving in to the administration, "the man." The system is perpetuated, the thing that you starting teaching to combat, because you are too tired at the end of the day to be revolutionary, inspirational, or even mildly entertaining. You find yourself saying "teacher things" and being that teacher that you mocked in high school. Then you see the kid in the back of the classroom mocking you, and goddamn them for being so disrespectful, so insolent, so ungrateful, so much like you were in middle school! Damn, I'm supposed to be responsible! When have I ever been the responsible, mature one? I had a discussion with my students to convince them that I am not an adult, that adults are the enemy. They laugh. I try to create an 'us against them' mentality in the classroom which works fine until I need to send a kid to the principal and feel like a sell out.

Then you hate yourself because you have forsaken yourself creatively. I see my friends, artists, musicians, activists, dishwashers... doing things I wish I had the energy to do. So many ideas go unrealized because of lack of time and energy. I want to paint, shoot photos, write another 'zine, be in a band, put out records, travel. I want to be a student again, live with 6 kids in a warehouse, have a completely fucked up sleeping schedule that means I only see six hours of daylight a week. I want to ride bikes all night, but I've given myself entirely to teaching, to a job that extends far beyond the paid hours, swallows your entire life. You have to ask yourself, is that okay? I'm 24. I have a career, a profession. Am I alright with that. I am an authority figure. When did this happen? You have to ask yourself these things.

There have been many days when I decided I'm not okay with all of this, when I've decided I can't deal with the bureaucracy, the idiocy, the dehumanization of both me and my students. I can't deal with the superficial fixation on bulletin board beauty contests when I have students who are being beaten by family, threatened by gangs, unable to read, have rotting teeth, can't see and don't have glasses, and miss school for weeks at a time because of horrible asthma caused by their environment. It's hard to care when you are being threatened with disciplinary action for not having large enough signs on your reading journal box, for tutoring kids in your classroom at lunch. You spend hours editing student papers to have them turn in 'rewrites' with no changes or corrections made. You fight to keep a student from being expelled because he promises you he's going to change, stop fighting, to have him punch a kid an hour later because someone told him he wash talking shit. So there have been many days when I left school at the end of the day unsure about whether I'd return the next day, but so far I have, and those days are becoming fewer and fewer.

Despite all the insanity and stupidity, I

do feel like I'm making a difference, and that's why I am still there. Amazing, sweeping, drastic differences that will alter the lifepath of all my students? No. Yes, my kids still have trouble with verb tense and identifying author's purpose. They still confuse their, there, and they're. Some still insist that Martin Luther King Jr. ended slavery, but now they can trace the evolution of civil disobedience and non-violent protest from Thoreau to Gandhi to King. Having a kid bring in a clipping of people being arrested for chaining themselves in the streets to protest the war and saying, "Look! Civil disobedience!" warms the heart. So does having several kids tell a boy who calls another kid a faggot to quit being homophobic after studying homophobia and civil rights. I have students who trust me, ask for advice, come to me to avoid and discuss problems with other kids, teachers, and administration. We talk about vegetarianism, whether white people are evil, if grown ups are wicked, racism in standardized testing, if we could die as a result of the current war. I have kids who want me to be proud of them, and I am. When I tell 'my kids' that I like them and someone says, "No teacher has ever told us that," I know I'm making a difference. They say I talk too much but they know I'll listen and advocate for them, and this is what they need, perhaps even more than the ability to write a well structured five paragraph comparison and contrast essay.

I'm asked frequently how long I'll be teaching. The majority of new teachers in New York quit in three years. Few people are expected to stick around. My kids had 4 Communication Arts teachers last year and told me they thought I'd be gone by January. In October I thought I might be gone by then too. I'm still here though, smiling 90% of the time, and as much as I stress about returning to work on Mondays, I know it is far less than I would at almost any other job and I'm happy to see my kids walk through the door in the morning. Some even seem happy to see me.

Today I told my kids that I had gotten a new job and that Friday would be my last day. They were upset and angry. They felt betrayed. "It is in the Bronx. I'll stop by and visit, see how ya'll are doing."

"Whatever man. You'll just forget about us." I let it go on for about 5 minutes before I began to feel really guilty. At first I'd thought I'd laugh 30 seconds in to it, and the few kids who I let in on the joke were trying to cover their smiles, but I started feeling like a jerk so I had to quit.

"April fools!" A couple kids didn't talk to me for the rest of the period. That is how I know I'm making a difference. But we're greedy people, so what is in it for us?

Last week after a particularly spirit breaking day, I realized that the thing that picks me up, reenergizes me the quickest, faster even than Soophie Nun Squad, is spending time with students after school. They jump at the chance to stay and help me clean up, and more talking is done than anything. Sometimes we just go shoot baskets or get a slice of pizza, and by the time it is over I never want to quit being a teacher. When this no longer holds true I'll need to re-evaluate and maybe walk away. Until then you'll find me in a classroom.

I'd love to hear from anyone, especially anyone thinking of becoming a teacher or any other teachers. I can be reached by email at evankilgore@hotmail.com or through the mail at 1803 Riverside Dr. Apt 5M/NYC, NY 10034. Show up at my door and I'll get Class 804 to deal with you. If I ever get some free time I should be putting another issue of my 'zine *Dual/Duel* out. I'm sure it'll be mostly about teaching because I don't have much else to talk about... Get in touch.

Evan Kilgore

PS: I am currently putting together a compilation CD to initiate and benefit after school arts programs at my school. Having been promised many things by my administration and receiving nothing, I'm taking matters into my own hands. Money raised would go towards supplies, workshops, and museum trips and instructors, including myself, would be volunteering time. Anyone interested in contributing, please get in touch.

Erik

I am presently in a graduate program at a state university in NY. I am studying to become a Social Studies teacher. What is really relieving to me is the shift that the teaching profession is taking from being conservative to somewhat liberal. What is even greater is the shift in my discipline. Because of authors like Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky, how we view history is breaking free of traditional values and heading more towards an approach that will hopefully encourage students to look critically at what they are reading and being taught. I look at many of my friends who are becoming teachers and are already teaching and through them and their methods, I truly see hope for the future.

Let's face it, who we are as adults and the decisions that we make can somewhat (not totally) be traced back to the educations that we received. Whether or not we are self educated or have been taught in schools, the words that we read and the things our teachers say to us, resonate throughout our adult lives. What we should defiantly be aware of is that these messages can be detrimental just as often as they can be beneficial.

I look back and think of some of the teachers I've had in the past. The ones that would mock the kids, play favorites and yes even strike some kids. How would that effect a young person? Also I think about the teachers that I've had that really made a difference in what I do. One of my professors in college taught "Crime and Delinquency." The course encouraged the students to think of how we can solve societal problems rather than just locking them up and ignoring them and in turn making them greater. He encouraged liberal thought by having students role play, giving us scripts to defend regardless of whether or not the script agreed with our own views.

The explicit lesson was there but the implicit message was just as important. It was a message of respect and understanding of others views and ideas. At times we get so caught up in what we believe and the discourse around those beliefs we render ourselves incapable of listening to others. I have been guilty of it myself, I think we all have at one time or another. What is truly

important is being able to catch ourselves in the act. If you greatly disagree with a person's ideas you should be able to give that person(s) a reason. These are the types of things that can be practiced in a classroom but are most important when each individual leaves the class.

Okay here is the shit. I recently had an experience that kept me up at night. I actually find myself re-acting it in horror. In one of my graduate classes (filled with about 30 people who are actively teaching) we had to do a magazine analysis of a publication read by young people. (I choose *HeartattaCk*, by the way.) The conversation went all across the board but when it landed on the subject or racism, sexism and homophobia, it became quite unnerving. Matched with scores and scores of sexist commentary made by class members one graduate student said that it is okay to leave mention of homosexual relationships out of magazine articles because people don't want to hear about that stuff. Another graduate student said "kids should have to wear uniforms to school. And we should go back to the way it was in the 1950s b/c we didn't have any race problems back then, now that we're giving all these people all this attention, they're causing us such problems." I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

If I addressed every comment made here I would have a short thesis, but I do want to address the one comment about the '50s and how race problems didn't exist. Apparently this guy must of went to school under a rock in some remote wilderness somewhere to actually believe such a ridiculous thing. It is amazing to me that this person went through 13 years of public school and at least 4 to 5 years of higher education and holds a degree. Do I think this person is a racist? No. Whooaa wait a second, not a racist, how the heck not? Well I don't think that his statements were driven by hatred only by ignorance. What the worst part of this class was, is the fact that these views went almost completely unchallenged. I was on the edge of my seat trying to make some sort of comment. I have done a lot of research on the history of race and the media and wanted to say the one thing that so many people in the class wanted to but were afraid to. What really hurt me is that I did not get a chance to mutter a single word, why? Because the teacher felt that I already "used up my allotted speaking space in class." These ideas are dangerous but need to be heard and discussed b/c they exist. Without anyone to challenge these ideas, many of these new teachers are going to stand in the front of our classrooms and teach our children these things. And please don't get me wrong I feel that we shouldn't teach any idea w/o challenge, regardless if it is so called liberal thought or conservative.

My school has what we call a blackboard. A web-based discussion board assigned to each class. After class, I read some of the comments people posted about this discussion. Could you believe that people were afraid to express their views that did not support the racist, homophobic and sexist norm of the class? I believe that the teacher was afraid to let me challenge these ideas as well. It is so important to express your ideas, and to do it with an open mind. You never know, someone might challenge what you say and make you re-think your position

on some issue.

It is great and important to be able to surround yourself with other people who share your ideas. But we must be aware that outside the doors any punk or hard core show there are people who are greatly opposed to many ideas within the liberal school. In the last month I had a women at DMV tell me that, regardless of my 6 pieces of ID, she couldn't issue me a new NY state driver's license w/o a birth certificate b/c people were flying planes into our buildings, she thought that was fine. A guy at the IRS told me that we need to go to war to save the people's lives in Iraq. People who are pro-war and people who are racist, sexist and homophobic are out there, and I feel that it is just as important (if not more) for these people to hear our ideas as it is for us to surround ourselves with like-minded people.

—Lilerik; Lilerik1@yahoo.com

Veracious V.

No Schools! No Jails! No War! A Call to Students: STRIKE!

Six months ago I dropped out of school. Almost halfway through college and I just couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't do it for two reasons. First, the practical reason, I had been attending a small liberal arts college on Manhattan and after experiencing the horrors of September 11th the high pace, anxiety, and (paradoxically) isolation of the big city really started to get to me. I began to have a relapse of anxiety and panic attacks from when I was a teenager and literally could not live in that environment, let alone study, and was forced to withdraw in the interest of my own sanity and survival. The second reason is more ideological. In addition to the disconnect I was feeling while living in the city—from myself, from humanity, from the people around me, from nature and Life in many ways—I was also becoming conscious of a feeling of interpersonal, emotional, mental, and spiritual severance within the realm of school. As an Education Studies major, it was my intellectual knowledge and critique of the school system coupled with this unsettling personal realization that made me finally decide to terminate my involvement in and, simultaneously, my voluntary, if silent, support of academia.

For me, self-education is an act of resistance, of protest. I am a self-educator and, as such, I am a social activist. The one is not separate from the other. They supplement each other in effect making me a stronger and more whole being.

From the ages five to ten I did not go to school, but stayed at home and taught myself, with the help of my parents, siblings, and a community of fellow non-schoolers. Growing up in this way allowed me the time, space and respect to realize my creativity and motivation and to exercise my own free-will and liberation. I was convinced of my own brilliance and agency, enthused by life, motivated by joy and beauty as the fulfillment of my desires, and optimistically, if subconsciously, actively engaged in the evolution of my own mind, body, spirit, and experience, my free will. I was headed for greatness, not of the fame and fortune variety, but of richness of life.

At the age of ten, however, my parents

decided to enroll me in a private school, though a supposedly "alternative" school, where for the next three years I experienced curricular rigidity, silencing of students by teacher authorities, disciplinary indignity, and many methods of squelching independent self-will, creativity, and self-expression. Not to mention the usual verbal and physical abuse from fellow students—mostly boys telling me I was fat, ugly, stupid, and worthless (surprise, surprise)—cliquish grouping, and racist and classist exclusion. After one year in this environment I began having anxiety and panic attacks which severely limited my aspirations throughout my teenage years and which still affect me today, as I have already described. This experience also set the tone for years of low self-esteem, depression, and physical self-abuse.

After three years, however, I had already become addicted to school and continued through the pain and anguish, through all the fucked up bureaucracy, through verbal, emotional, and mental abuse, through social stratification and interpersonal segregation. I felt, but never saw these things for what they were, my sight clouded by the haze of addiction, until halfway through college when I finally said enough is enough, and chose life over school.

You see, school is a racist, capitalist, patriarchal, paternalistic, heteronormative and homophobic, ageist, ableist, technocratic, bureaucratic, right-wing industry whose sole purpose is to divide and conquer, to control, subdue and subvert the masses as a tool for maintaining social hegemony and the status quo. School is an institution whose purpose is to indoctrinate the minds of young people to mold them into cogs for the capitalist machine of the state and to accept prescribed social barriers and hierarchies so that by the time they are adults they will, in effect, control themselves and each other thus perpetuating the system. This is able to occur through the humiliating and soul crushing practices of testing, grading, surveillance, and in school lock-down as well as through ingrained ideologies of social hegemony and oppression.

The practice of testing and grading students undermines critical thinking, creativity, and self-expression as well as manufactures hierarchy and separation between students based on performance paraded as an illustration of an individual's worth, value, and ability to succeed. The purpose of such a system of rewards and punishment becomes one of "weeding out" those who do not fit a narrow mold, labeling them as failures, "disabled," problem students, etc. They are then separated from their peers, their more "successful," "normal" counterparts, and placed in remedial or disciplinary classes suited for steering them in the appropriate direction for their caste of the supposedly less intelligent and unruly. Testing and grading also create and justify competition between students; when members of an oppressed class or classes are made to fight one another for survival under a hierarchical system competition is the effect. It acts to divide and conquer, to undermine solidarity and community creating instead isolation, suspicion, and bitterness, thereby diverting attention away from the real culprits: the oppressors and the systems and ideologies they uphold. What we need instead is cooperation and collaboration in

educational endeavors, fostering a sense of alliance, support, and community struggle in an all-inclusive process towards a common goal. But perhaps the greatest affront perpetrated by the practices of testing and grading in school is that it teaches students that doing something and making an effort is only worth while if there is a tangible reward involved, if it will move one higher up the ladder of social hierarchy, and that without this reward all that one is or does is worthless.

Another affront to the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of young people perpetrated by the school environment is that schools, especially urban schools, are looking and acting more and more like jails. Upon entering the school students are made to go through elaborate and violating security procedures after which they are under surveillance by video cameras as well as predatory teachers, administrators, security guards, and police. Students even have to acquire a hall pass from an adult authority in order to go to the bathroom, an unavoidable bodily function which hence becomes a privilege, not a right. And detention and in-school suspension are utilized, proctored by adult authorities, as punishment for behavior that threatens or undermines the existing law and order of the school. We are literally training youth for jail.

Indeed it does seem that the prison industrial complex is getting hand outs from the education industrial complex, such that old-school games and mild misdemeanors which would have warranted a scolding, detention, even suspension or, at worst, expulsion from school, are now getting kids thrown in juvy. "What were once playground fights and suspensions now become arrests and felonies, snaring many more youth into a racist juvenile [in]justice system," write Steven Francisco and Amanda Devecka-Rinear.¹ They go on to explain that youth of color are made specifically vulnerable by this trend since "Black and Hispanic youth are treated more severely than White teenagers charged with comparable crimes at every step in the juvenile [in]justice system." Furthermore, in states like New York and California, the state governments are ruling to have teenagers as young as 16 years of age incarcerated in adult prisons for juvenile offenses. These youth are "7.7 times more likely to commit suicide, 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted, twice as likely to be beaten, and 33% more likely to return to jail than are their counterparts in juvenile detention centers," according to a study completed in 1999 by the Sentencing Project (Ibid.). And, viola! There you have it, the criminalization of youth and an exponential boom in the prison industrial complex. All in the name of discipline, order, and control. It all begins in the school.

School also, as the most widely utilized, compulsory industry and mechanism for socialization, is responsible for laying the foundation for systems of social hegemony to exist by instilling them in our youth and, in essence, re-establishing their power in the next generation for the future. School naturalizes and attempts to justify the existence of an ageist society where young people are discriminated against systemically and without apology from adults and the state. Young people have no

constitutional rights, no right to vote, no economic rights, no rights to their own freedom and self-will. And ageism is naturalized—by parents, the school system, and the culture at large—under the pretense of adult supremacy. In this way school acts as a low-grade concentration camp for holding youth and socializing them into submission to the dominant, hegemonic culture. Graduation occurs when (and if) you have proved your subservience to this system, your willingness to be controlled by it as well as your willingness to perpetuate it. Once you reach this position you no longer stand with young people, you stand against them. Ageism and adult supremacy segregates youth from adults, putting adults in positions of authority and control as the oppressor. With this hierarchy in place it becomes difficult and rare for lines of solidarity and alliance to be drawn between adults and youth, thus severing and damaging relationships and creating feelings of alienation and dehumanization which are devastating to one's sense of Self and connection to other people and to humanity as a whole.

Patriarchy and paternalism is also pervasive in school, not in any unique way, but as it represents itself in society at large, thus laying the groundwork for the maintenance of traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Young women are taught that we are second class citizens, socialized into being boy crazy, anti-intellectual, food obsessed, body obsessed, superficially pleasing, accommodating, both emotionally and physically (especially to men), and submissive (ditto). The mistreatment and abuse young women experience in school from male teachers, administrators, and their peers only reinforces the misogynistic, objectifying, and dehumanizing stereotypes that we ingest from all angles of society—our parents, our peers, men and boys in general, whether familiar or strangers, TV, movies, music, magazines, advertisements, billboards, the list goes on. Thus many young women tend toward eating disorders and other forms of physical self-abuse and obsession, leading to depression and suicidal tendencies, as well as they learn to compete with one another for attention in a male supremacist world. And again we see the tactic of divide and conquer in a hierarchical, inhumane society.

Heterocentric curriculum in school creates homophobia by teaching that heterosexuality is normal while homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgendered is weird, abnormal, and ultimately and monumentally problematic. Classes teach nothing of gay rights, gay liberation struggles, or non-hetero terminology, most often when an important figure or writer is taught who was gay that fact is quietly left out of the lesson (though it quite obviously would have had a significant impact on that person's life and work), and the multiple dimensionality of gender is never discussed; its binary dichotomy never questioned. Queers in school are threatened with both physical violence and verbal abuse and are rarely supported by their peers, teachers or administrators, or their communities at large, all due to the prevailing homophobia bred by heteronormative thinking.

Racism has held a strong foundation in the school system since its fledgling years, a position it still holds today. The study of Craniology—the science of examining skull shape and size to determine intelligence—which was

thought to prove people of color were less intelligent and more animalistic than people of European decent, and especially European bred males, was used to justify slavery and the mistreatment and social and educational exclusion of Black people. While this theory was obviously disproved many years ago, its repercussions lay embedded in so-called educational praxis. Today we have a similar form of discrimination called "racial tracking," a practice, if not a policy, of "guiding" disproportionate numbers of Black and Latina/o youth away from advanced classes and the academic resources necessary to succeed in school, to higher education, and on to the business world. Such a racist practice of educational segregation acts to preserve white supremacy and the status quo creating a kind of economic apartheid in this country.

While Affirmative Action was supposed to bring an end to racial segregation and create "diversity" in schools and on the job, the lack of diversity in private and higher education is staggering due in some part to racial tracking as well as to skewed admissions processes, Standardized Testing, high expenses for private and, recently, even public education, and the increasing probability for youth of color to end up in prison. What ends up happening is that "diversity" turns into "tokenism." Private and affluent institutions bring in just enough, a sprinkling if you will, of people of color, a handful of Asians, a few Blacks, and maybe one or two Latinas/os, to contrast the whiteness and fill the classes in the tiny, struggling and forgotten Ethnic Studies programs. These students face the usual manifestations of white racism, prejudice, and discrimination inside academia as they do on a day to day basis, as well as are expected to concentrate their extra time and energy studying a Eurocentric curriculum wherein color is vilified and forgotten and whiteness remains safely hidden behind an invisible shroud of silent but effective power. On top of this, community between students and faculty of color is feeble due to lack of critical mass while support and understanding is rare from their white peers.

Classism and capitalism, like racism and white supremacy, are deeply rooted within the school system. School is and has always been set up to train and prepare workers for economic, industrial, and, more recently, technological productivity. Qualities such as punctuality, obedience, attention, order, and courtesy are instilled through school for the benefits of employers and smooth production. What is more, there are drastic economic inconsistencies between schools nationwide, some schools having endowments, state-of-the-art facilities, or sufficient if not unnecessary educational and extracurricular resources for their students while other schools lack the physical space and sometimes even working toilets and heat, much less the appropriate and adequate equipment and resources their students need to fulfill their educational aims and requirements. Such an environment creates and legitimizes competition and resentment between students as they section themselves off into groups based on common social status. As academia acts as a tool for class mobility, assimilation, and classist ideology, students of lower class status face bullying and exclusion from their more socially privileged

peers as well as pressure to conform to classist standards by internalizing, using, and perpetuating classist ideology and abuse. They are also forced into fierce competition with other students, both privileged and not, either to assimilate to or past the social levels of their affluent peers, or to achieve scholarships and honors which are not made widely available, but which one must fight to win.

Considering this deeply wounding, sinister process of socialization and its outcomes, it is no wonder that kids are killing themselves and each other, fighting, throwing up in bathrooms, brutalizing their bodies, getting hooked on drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. Schools are becoming miniature war zones, both figuratively and literally. The day of the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, CO was the same day as the most horrendous and destructive U.S. bombing of Kosovo. No wonder.

No wonder when so much of what is taught in school, whether insidious or blatant, whether within the curriculum or the culture, is based in hate, suspicion, intolerance and greed. We teach kids to hate and suspect and turn against one another in the names of sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and ableism. We teach kids to sidestep and compete with one another in the names of individual success and the greedy ascent to the top. And we teach kids that *we* hate and suspect them, in effect turning our backs against them, in the names of adult supremacy, control, order, hierarchy and power.

School attempts to imprison young people's bodies, minds, and, most tragically, their spirits, creating pain and anger which lead to hatred which only leads to more pain and anger and, eventually, to violence. A vicious cycle.

The only dim and fading light at the end of the tunnel is adulthood, the final graduation into oppressor status, a victory steeped in the bitterness of internalized oppression and mental enslavement. Our youth will then become the next generation of the simultaneously oppressors and oppressed, *oppressed* by the maintenance of *oppressive* ideologies and systems as well as by the *oppression* they use to *oppress* others now that they are *oppressors*. They will become both bosses and workers, the proverbial slave driver and, simultaneously, the slave. They will become parents, teachers and administrators, using whatever power they possess, whether small or great, to clamor further up the social ladder, stepping on heads as they go, to the mythic success and ultimate power that does not await them at the illusory top. They will know this or deny it. Either way they will be bitter and angry and in pain. And so the cycle continues. Pain. Anger. Hatred. Violence. War.

And we arrive where we are. Three thousand Iraqi's dead in the past two weeks since we started bombing. Over a million children in the last twelve years due to sanctions. Young men and women, many of whom enlisted in order to get an education, are being sent off to kill and be killed. Cities in ruins, internal systems destroyed. No water. No food. No medical supplies. No "weapons of mass destruction" found. Except the ones being used by our own hands. And the bombing continues.

This war is not about terrorism. It never was. It is about our government using hierarchy,

social hegemony, and oppressive ideologies to secure global power and control by military conquest for the expansion of the United States Empire. The excuse that Iraqi's are terrorists, given to champion the cause of George W. Bush and the United States military industrial complex, is a racist one, portraying and assuming all Muslim people as terrorists, brown-skinned demons, essentially violent, indifferent to the virtues of freedom, life, and liberty, and heathens of The Good Faith. It is an unjust war fought for unjust reasons for an unjust price for the benefit of maintaining and expanding injustice. This country is bordering on fascism. On top of murdering people in other countries, our government and so-called President are threatening freedom of speech, a woman's right to choose to have an abortion, and representation of women and people of color in academia and on the job at home. The economic divide in this country is widening, racial segregation is growing, and religious and right-wing extremism and fanaticism is on the rise.

They say we're in Code Orange Alert? No shit. If not from the threat of terrorist attacks than from ourselves. The cycle continues. Pain creates more pain. Hatred creates more hatred. Violence begets violence. Terrorism breeds terrorism. From our classrooms to our streets to our policies to the way we treat ourselves, treat other people, other peoples, other nations.

Six months ago I dropped out of school in a state of panic and pain. For me, that is an act of protest, of resistance, of revolution. Not silence! Of saying, **I will not support this industry with my body or my mind or my spirit! I will work to create change, to create authenticity and meaning, social justice, peace! I will unveil truth! And I will do it out of respect and love and solidarity for and with young people, poor and working people, people of color, LGBTQ people, women, people of varying abilities and paths! And I will do it out of respect and love and solidarity for and with feminists, anti-racists, gay liberationists, environmentalists, the young at heart, anti-capitalists and those struggling for economic justice, activists of any kind—I don't care what you identify as—who are working for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.**

Young people of this country and world, I invite you to stand with me. Do not submit yourselves to this industry that lays the foundation for fear, pain, anger, hatred and violence. Do not give it your silent support and validation! "The only possible solution, is ending the power of school."² **STAND UP! WALK OUT! STIKE! Demand for your rights to be recognized, for your voices to be heard and listened to, for the violence at home and abroad to stop, and for a new world to be made and bestowed upon your generation and the generations to come! Demand for racial and economic justice, for a truly liberatory educational praxis, for an end to systemic social hegemony, hierarchy, and oppression! YOU HAVE POWER! Claim it! Use it! This is our world, let's make it so.**

Peace, and may the revolution be with you, Veracious V.

¹ Taken from their article "Hostile Takeover" in *Fortune News*. Vol. XXXV, no. 4; winter 2000.

² Last line in *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* by Joel H. Spring. Beacon Press, Boston: 1973.

Note: This article is a highly edited portion from a longer and more detailed piece which is still in the works. To obtain a copy of this or to place comments, questions, or suggestions, send an email to veracious_v@hotmail.com.

Sasha Rex

PUNK ROCK TEACHERS RULE!

Last week I faced two considerable foes in my classroom. I managed to vanquish one after a heated battle, but the other waits in the background, appeased by the other teachers. I speak of the televised phenomena of the NCAA basketball tournament and the invasion of Iraq. I approve of neither. My job is to educate, not to channel surf. I want my students to learn, and neither watching near-illiterates throw a ball around nor watching government propaganda disguised as news will accomplish my goal.

I'm guessing that most *HeartattaCk* readers don't really care about college basketball, and neither do I. But I teach in Louisville, Kentucky, home of the U of L Cardinals, a legitimate NCAA contender, and sixty miles from the University of Kentucky, whose men's basketball team is ranked first in the nation and is favored to win the tournament. It seems like all my students have an active interest in basketball, and they are evenly split between the U of L red and the Kentucky blue. I am the odd one out, as when they ask which team I like and I say, "the Detroit Red Wings." And the one day Andre asked whether I watched the game last night; there was stunned silence and disbelief when I told them that "I don't watch TV." I like hockey, and basketball isn't hockey. And I hate television.

The truth is that I used to like college basketball. I didn't follow it religiously, but I always watched the NCAA tournament because I found it entertaining (and a good thing to have on when I wanted to nap). At the end of last year, Bowl time for college football, I read an editorial that compared the graduation rates of the best college football teams in the nation. Only two of the twenty-four teams profiled had a graduation rate higher than 60%. One of those was a service academy (Army, I think) that doesn't offer scholarships. The rest of them offered scholarships to their players—paid them to attend the school. The six-year graduation rates for these so-called student-athletes ranged from the upper 50s to the upper teens. In monetary terms these students were given the equivalent of between \$12,000 a year (in-state tuition plus room and board at a Big 12 school, like Oklahoma) and \$45,000 a year (out of state tuition plus room and board at a school like UC Berkeley or Duke). In terms of educational opportunities they are given access to the resources that thousands of people pay thousands of dollars for, and that thousands of people can't afford. They waste it. They throw away this opportunity. It's a big FUCK YOU to all the people who can't afford to go to college, to all the kids with good grades and no money, to all the people who want to learn but don't have the financial means to do so.

Most of the NCAA basketball games are scheduled for prime time or the weekends, but in the first round (32 games) the television coverage starts at 12:30 on Thursday and Friday, two hours before school lets out. I didn't have any problems Thursday since none of the important teams were playing and my algebra class had to review for a test, but Friday I entered the battle. Kentucky was playing some unknown, grossly overmatched team, and the game was a guaranteed blowout. I had my most advanced computer class, and they were almost finished with their six weeks projects (two weeks early). They didn't want to do any work; they just wanted their basketball. I wouldn't give in. "Not in this room," I said. Instead of arguing, one of them asked if they could go to another room. I said it was okay as long as the other teachers didn't mind (and I knew they wouldn't, everyone was watching the game). They abandoned me, only to wander back forty minutes later when the blowout became boring.

The next week they asked why I didn't let them watch the game and I told them. I told them that I had no respect for the basketball players. I told them about the absurd graduation rates and the money and opportunity that the full athletic scholarships represented. I told them about how I and many other people would love to have a full scholarship to college, especially schools like Duke or Michigan, and how we would take advantage of that opportunity. Then I told them that I thought the basketball players were wasting this opportunity, and that I can't respect that, and thus I can't respect them or support them. My students had never heard this point of view before, or these facts. They responded with contemplative silence, as they often do when I tell them the truth about how things work or when I make a blunt comment regarding the school or the local education bureaucracy.

I cannot watch the news about the invasion of Iraq, whether at school or at home. Nor can I read about it without feeling the weight of bias and the frailty of hastily drawn conclusions. I know it's happening, and I have some idea of what battles are being fought, where they are occurring, and how they are being fought, but I don't have a clear picture (or a clear politically colored caricature) of the situation. Every report filed and written or broadcast by an American newspaper or network must be (censored and) approved by the US military, thus every report is tweaked with propaganda—CNN is the ultimate PR firm for the US military. That's not the war I want to watch.

The pressure to watch the war started a few months before the first shot was fired. As events unfolded and the debate raged in the UN, Bush, Blair, et al, made countless formal and informal speeches. CNN and CSPAN strove to cover them all, and CNN endowed them with an air of grave importance. Occasionally one of my students, a lazy egotistical jerk, would walk into class saying, "the President is on TV." I usually responded with a nonchalant "so what?" One day I responded by telling the kid that I thought everything Bush says is a lie... that left him quiet for some time.

When the war started all the teachers around me turned on the television. I guess it

was history being made, but I didn't want any part in making it. My television stayed blank, despite the many pleas. When my students asked I said no, firmly, and no one questioned me. A few students insisted, and I allowed them to find another classroom (no surprise that lessons were suspended for the preliminary brainwashing sessions). This brought my abnormal behavior to the attention of other teachers. When they questioned me I let weak but acceptable excuses pass through my lips, and my colleagues walked away just as confused. I never once shouted "the media lies" because I didn't know what their reaction would be, and I feared the Pandora's Box I might open with such a radical statement. My students never really cared; they just saw the war coverage as an excuse to get out of doing their work. In most classes that happened, but not in mine. The lazy jerk from above took that approach to a farcical level, claiming that by watching the war coverage he would actually learn something. That he never put any effort into learning anything led me to chuckle at his requests before allowing him to beg another teacher to take him for the period. Perhaps tomorrow I'll ask him what he learned from watching CNN.

By the end of the first week the hysteria had diminished, only to be replaced by basketball. While lessons resumed I noticed that in all the classrooms around me the televisions sat silently flickering. The war was no longer worthy of our undivided attention, but it continued to force its way into the students' minds. It acted as a sanctioned distraction, drawing the children away from the teacher while planting subliminal propaganda messages in their brains.

As I write the war is entering its third week. The NCAA Basketball tournaments have dwindled to the final four teams. The television looms in my classroom, but I refuse to give it power (both literal and figurative) over my students. I'm sure that my students resent my refusal, but they also realize that I saw through their efforts to avoid work. They don't understand my choices, but, like my choice to forego a car, they are intrigued by and respectful of my lifestyle. Perhaps I am teaching them by example that an alternative to the mainstream lifestyle exists, and that one can be happy living that way. That is the most important lesson I can teach.

Questions, comments, criticisms, or remarks can be addressed to xrobotx@yahoo.com. Wooooaaahhhh THRASH!

Lisa Sussman

I Fight Authority. Authority Always Wins.

A little less than a year ago, I somehow found myself as a high school teacher. Previously, I had been working a bunch of unglamorous jobs to pay for my existence in the economic abyss known as San Francisco. Then I got a phone call from a friend of mine who is a teacher telling me about two openings at his school for teachers (one for me, one for my best friend = punks are taking the fucking school). Next came a whirlwind interview, a quick decision and a highly inefficient cross-continental move in a station wagon. Before I knew what I had gotten myself into, I was sitting at a bunch of utterly futile first-year teacher orientations in my old stomping grounds of Greensboro, NC.

I had two weeks to figure out how to run a classroom, how to come up with lessons, how to find supplies, how to process the incredible crop of paperwork and policies that made their way into my box, and how to be a teacher and lead students into artistic success three times a day. I had no time to form expectations of what was going to happen. I spent a lot of time focusing on the crucial moment when the bell would ring, I would close my door and turn around to find 25 to 30 kids staring at me, completely confident that I would give them instruction. I figured I would either fumble through an introductory lecture, or feign confusion over the "glaring misunderstanding" that had found me there and excuse myself to go find the students their real class. There was no way to prepare for the unknown. I was going to have to fake it.

By mid-semester, faking it was still working and I was learning a more vividly personal meaning to the phrase "on-the-job training." The solutions that one is forced to invent on a minutely basis to deal with the constantly shifting state of affairs in the classroom often result in hilarious miscalculations. I started to enjoy the precarious challenge of trying to steer a classroom down the path of good old-fashion sitcom mishap without careening into the telephone pole of out and out chaos. It was pretty exhausting and it didn't work a whole lot. Every day, I felt like I had been assigned the feat of putting on a completely improvised one-person one-act play. No script, props or costumes provided. Make something happen with 17 colored pencils, 6 broken rulers and watercolor pans that only had brown and purple left. The good thing that I learned about kids is that you have to make an observable string of bad errors, like causing an overhead projector fire or getting locked in your supply closet, before they realize that you don't know what the fuck you're doing. This is because that as public high school students, they are so used to doing arbitrarily mundane tasks that they completely accept the fact that you just asked them to cut circles out of paper. They may have suspected that I was hopelessly without a plan, but they were nice and didn't say anything.

Since the volume of work was so high for the first two months of school, it took me a while to stop and take inventory on what I was doing or why. I was aware that my situation was pretty ideal compared to the experiences of other new teachers: the school was pretty mild as far as discipline problems, the administration pretty much left me alone unless I messed up during a fire drill or something, my class sizes were fairly manageable and I had the support of a lot of teachers. This profession inevitably involves some rote bullshit, but my experience so far had been pretty good. But something wasn't coming together for me.

Everybody tells you when you first start out that a good classroom is structured and well managed and features docile students working on task for the entire period. They give you little ideas for teaching activities like flash card game shows and role-playing crossword puzzles. Maybe that shit makes learning more fun for some kids, but I remember it being a huge drag and that it tended to incite fight or flight reactions left and right. Looking back on my first few months of teaching, I realize that while I was writing kids

up for tardies or ushering kids back to their assigned seats or taking away their Extreme Skittles, there was a voice in the back of my head saying, "What is the point of doing this?" How could I have forgotten the main theorem of my teenage years that had been firmly proven over and over again: high school is bullshit. And here I was, a fulltime shit farmer.

Between then and now, I've done a lot of thinking on this subject and here's what I've come up with for better or for worse: old world style education is no longer a meaningful and relevant institution for many kids; instead, it has become more of a means of indoctrinating and normalizing total control over one's individuality and intellectual freedom. Public school is where kids are supposed to learn to think and act within certain acceptable parameters and to unconditionally follow a uniform set of rules that apply to everyone regardless of their individual situation. That way when they get older, they won't be surprised when throwing a temper tantrum about working for 50 hours without overtime pay just gets them fired. American society has come to rely so heavily on school systems to get the nation's youth ready to accept orders from the higher-ups that getting rid of or even revising this system could only take place if most of mainstream America were to be knocked unconscious for a good while. Adults who have gone through the schools themselves, who have been appropriated by the work force come to believe that kids need to learn this stuff for their own good.

Hence the cycle that I see every single day. Kid goes to high school and is forced to go to boring-ass World History class. For an hour and a half. Of course there is interesting material to be learned about the history of the world, but kid sees no connection between his/her life and Magna Carta. Kid has already had years of conditioning that school is irrelevant to him/her, so unfortunately has no reason to believe that this class will be any different. Kid becomes resentful of being held hostage by dull/mean/crazy teacher who doesn't appear to know what the fuck is going on. Kid, like most of us, would rather being in charge of deciding what to do with own time. Kid knows repercussions of actively reclaiming own time by getting up and walking out of classroom, so must devise class period endurance strategies to extinguish boredom and flip a new breed of challenging material back on teacher. Such strategies include: talking to neighbor, writing notes, drawing marijuana leaves, sleeping, throwing objects, asking to go to bathroom and wandering halls for 30 minutes or causing disturbance in class. All strategies are in violation of school rules and will result in punishment. Kid comes to learn that school is a place where taking personal liberties is met with hassle and reduction of other freedoms. Kid eventually either gets fed up and tells various teachers and principals to fuck off or learns to lie, cheat and steal in order to have freedom but not get caught with it.

I know a ton of kids at who are constantly in trouble for breaking the rules. They earn the title of "troublemaker" or "pain-in-my-ass" depending on whether or not you're in the teacher's lounge. These kids can't make a move without getting thrown in ISS. Sometimes it's because the student was a jerk; sometimes it's

because the teacher or administrator was a jerk. Their high school existence ceases to have anything to do with education and becomes an endless Tom And Jerry cartoon of provocation and retaliation. The student refusing to accept what they see as senseless attempts by the administration to control their every move, and the administration answering with even more control. At this sorry point, the issue at hand is no longer what is best for this individual student, but instead, who is going to end up in control? One thing I've learned for sure about teaching and many other things is that the more you try to control something, the more it controls you.

For me personally, I could give a rat's ass about chewing gum, kids being off-task, tardies, skipping, cussing, being loud, walking around, eating food, taking off shoe in class just to see sock or whatever as long as it doesn't disrupt everybody else's learning. The only reason I find myself enforcing these rules is because if for some reason another teacher or an administrator were to walk into my classroom, I wouldn't want it to look like the bus had just arrived from Crazytown. Plus, it's my job to make these kids follow school rules, and I don't want to lose my job. But it's really hard to tell a kid to do something they don't want to do and know that it's for no good reason other than it's the rule.

I'm constantly revising my philosophy of teaching. Above all, I'm there to serve them and to help them. The hardest part is figuring out how to do that. I asked some kids once what they thought made a good teacher. One of the kids, an intelligent and respectful male student who got into trouble a lot, said that he thought a good teacher did little things to make it easier on the students during the day. Teachers who can see that sometimes kids need a break, so why not just give them one. Sometimes I agree with that and sometimes I don't. Sometimes kids think they need a break, but really they need a push. Even if it's on a stupid art project that they don't care about. I tell them that it's not the project that's important necessarily, but the trying their best. They still turn in gel pen dribble as their rendition of a charcoal still life sometimes, but you can't always win.

Before I started teaching, I never imagined how much I would love working with kids. Coming from the cozy punk sphere of lofty values and informed culture, it was a shock to find out things like how every single kid, gansta to Gap aficionado to library anime nerd, loves the hell out of Eminem and that most of them think that Osama Bin Laden is 'wack.' Still, every kid and their weird little worlds constantly leave me with new insight, hope and admiration. They wear all these ridiculously tragic outfits and their personalities are all raw and awkward and hanging out all over the place, because they haven't quite learned how to get over themselves. Yet they keep up these flimsy makeshift guards, invisible to each other, but to me as conspicuous as would be wearing cheesecloth jacket into a rainstorm. But it's cool that way. I wish that adults were more that way sometimes. The world would be a much more exciting and startling place if we were not taught to leave our loud indoor voices behind in high school.

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When I was told this issue of HeartattaCk was going to have an education theme, the first band to pop in my head was Countdown to Putsch and I knew I needed to do an interview. In my opinion, no other band has had members so involved in and outspoken about education. Their past releases on Mountain and Ebullition have both contained books, music, and interviews. Soon they'll have a split LP/CD with Tem Eyos Ki, which is a part of So Much to Give's education benefit series, and a double CD on CrimethInc entitled Interventions in Hegemony. Interview by Jonathan Lee

HaC: What are the major obstacles educators in America are facing?

Rich: Before I answer this, I should make it clear that I am presently writing a dissertation for my PhD in Political Theory and have thus far only taught one college course for one year. Although my experience is minimal, I am primarily interested in academia in order to become a teacher, and at bottom, I want to become a teacher for social and political reasons. That said, in my

are held back by a lack of funding.

Of course, money can't solve everything. But why not shower money down on these kids that need it so badly? There's no reason. **Chris:** I think that the biggest obstacle faced by educators looms as a fundamental social pathology—the misappropriation of social effort towards indoctrination by corporate media and away from communal social education. Schools just are not the temples they ought to be—the television reins supreme as educator, followed closely by other media outlets. Go into any school and start talking to the kids and you will quickly realize that the vast majority of what they know comes from media, not educational institutions. As long as we learn primarily via media and not through educational institutions, teachers will be second-class workers.

One way to visualize this imbalance of priorities is to compare the amount of money and/or human effort we expend in media with the amount we spend on schools. But finances are only a part of the story; this really comes down to social values, and it seems to me that the finances

corporate America are robustly rewarded. Plus, states and the Federal government talk about education as if the institutions are generally sufficient. Attention needs to be redirected from test scores and statistics about success after graduation to increasing budgets and the allocation of money for expanding educational resources and distributing the best of them more fairly across the country. Individual educators and NGOs can only do so much to redress these problems, which is why, for everyday citizens, there is not very much that can be done to solve these problems. The first step is to change the national thinking about education, to change the general consensus. A new common sense needs to be produced about these things before legislation can change, and to do this, the only thing that everyday citizens can do is kick and scream about the problems, and to try to create stakes for powerholders by getting out of hand. But to me, this is really a question of reform. I am an anarchist, but the idea of building new counter institutions that rival inadequate schools requires lots of capital and even with the capital,

COUNTDOWN TO PUTSCH

experience, there seems to be two major obstacles in American education. One has to do with praxis and the other has to do with funding.

Regarding praxis, the problem is that the most practical aspects of education have to do with preparing students to be good, cooperative citizens in a capitalist social structure. Criticisms of this social structure are either completely excluded from educational curricula, or they are presented as philosophical "ways of thinking" that should not be taken seriously enough to incorporate into the way we live and act. At the younger levels of education, it is generally considered to be impractical to spend very much time learning about what is wrong with American society.

Next, is the issue of funding. This country simply does not invest in its educational institutions. Military budgets, campaign financing, and tax breaks for the wealthy are major American distributive mechanisms that reveal our nation's top priorities. There are many countries in the EU, for example, that fund education substantially, that fund students as a national priority. In America, the poor are still systematically excluded from the best education that America has to offer.

Ben: Money. My school (a public middle school in Manhattan) is always struggling for money. It is an act of violence to pack 30 kids into a classroom and tell them to learn. The children are getting screwed. There's all sorts of money to subsidize the oil industry, the meat industry, the pharmaceutical industry, etc. There's no money to hire another teacher at our school. A class of 15 kids can basically be taught by anyone. A class of 30 can only be handled by the extremely talented. So with more money to hire more teachers a radical transformation in education would occur. There are smart people in education right now. There are a lot of great books and programs right now. There are a lot of great schools struggling to do good right now. They

would shift if the social values were to shift. We need to making a compelling case to our neighbors that our current focus on consumerism, anonymity, and individualism is causing us great pain, both as a community and as individuals. One fairly effective way to make this case is to become an educator — to work in the schools promoting an education focused on community, service, and other non-material/non-consumeristic sources of joy. But this case has to be made to a broader audience, and so the task of educating has to extend beyond the schools and into whole communities.

Another major obstacle faced by educators is similarly social; fundamental inequalities make it impossible to realize the potential of education to promote liberty, equity, security, and community ('social education'). Because we live in a society with an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, and because we systematically translate existing class differences into educational disparity, education is hobbled at all levels. Rich kids feel no obligation to act on the ideals of a strong social education, and use education chiefly to maintain their class status. Poor kids may be exposed to the ideals of a strong social education, but are locked out of the opportunities offered by quality education, and therefore have little chance of acting on the social education they receive.

HaC: What is the difference between what is being done about these problems and what should be done?

Rich: I don't think that anything is really being done about the problems of praxis and funding at an institutional level in the U.S. For sure, there are individuals and groups out there who help the poorest get more funding and there are awards and opportunities created for people who are interested in socially relevant projects. But, our teachers and social workers mostly have to beg and scrape to get fair salaries, to get unions, while those involved in the most needless aspects of

there could never be enough alternate schools to compensate for the deficiencies in this country. This is why the institutional problems of education require a deep restructuring of institutional priorities.

Ben: Honestly, things have just started to look up in NYC. But by this, I mean that it is possible that some systemic improvements may be made. I don't believe that the current chancellor of public schools or the mayor are willing to go as far as is necessary to properly serve the population of NYC. That said, there has been some streamlining of the extremely bureaucratic system. There has been some work on improving instruction. Teachers in NYC are now fairly compensated for their work.

However, a complete turnaround in our priorities needs to occur before the situation gets to a satisfactory level. Money needs to be funneled into education. It is the responsibility of the community, which in this case is (theoretically) represented by the city government to adequately educate the population. Obviously the way in which education is currently funded makes this impossible. Money should be shifted from other sources to change this. Nothing else is acceptable.

Chris: This question is difficult to answer because there is so little being done and so much to do. One thing that I see, having spent eight years dedicated to education, is that we have to start addressing the origins of our educational problems. Being a teacher or any other kind of educator puts you on the front lines, where you can do little about the larger war.

The problem is that the dialogue in this country is dominated by the media, which happens also to be the biggest competitor with social education. So we need to find a way to make people realize that indoctrination via media is at odds with social education. Using the media to bring itself down isn't just ironic, it's unrealistic. There's a fire in the firehouse — don't expect the

firemen to put it out. Such a situation begs for grassroots efforts. People who see the truth about media need to get out there and talk to people who don't. Once we get people to acknowledge that we currently 'educate' our national community via the media, we can begin to have a discussion about how to rediscover a true social education.

HaC: Where should you draw the line between educator and activist?

Chris: As I conceive the terms in my own life, I personally do not draw a line between the two. My activities as an educator encompass many of the qualities I consider to be activist. I think that there is this underlying assumption that there is some line between being an educator and an activist, and that this line is perpendicular to some implied continuum between objective and subjective. I have heard educators criticized for being "too activist," which usually means that they are being "too subjective"; we idealize educators as the providers of objective information. I think that this distinction is fairly meaningless; the facts are objective, their interpretation is subjective. It seems to me that good activists and good educators alike participate in both the dissemination of facts and the dialogue involved in their interpretation.

Ben: There is no line. When you teach people to read and write you are empowering them. When students learn important math skills or their country's history they become empowered.

Some teachers think you need to leave your own views out of the classroom. But this is to pretend objectivity which is a lie. It seems sensible to carefully review books for racism, sexism or homophobia before teaching them but to mention a peace rally or inform students about the real reasons for attacking Iraq seems out-of-line. The hegemonic viewpoint is shoved down my students' throat all day from the TV, movies, magazines and ads. I don't think it's out of line to give them an opposing view in my class. However, I always leave room for students to retain their own beliefs. I just try to expose them to an alternative to what they're generally presented with.

Rich: In my view, a really good educator is also always an activist. What do activists commonly attempt to do? They try to reconfigure understandings to accommodate new ways of living, to encourage new ways of thinking about our world. Educators, at their best, also attempt to do this. Of course, being this kind of an educator does not replace other forms of activism. I am not suggesting that at all. Rather, I would argue for a broadening of the idea of activism to include countless kinds of action, so that publishers and teachers and artists and actors and radio hosts and movie makers, as well as people taking to the streets, can enjoy a broad populist movement for radical social change.

HaC: Explain how backwards American education is on emphasizing high school/college instead of elementary learning which is vastly under funded.

Rich: I already touched on this a bit in the first question, but college, more than elementary and high school education, is sold like a product, like SUVs to the wealthy. Inadequate financial aid programs aside, the American University treats

its curriculum like a luxury cruise. Within academia, you do have many people trying to reverse these priorities, trying to get a diverse student body, but the degree to which these initiatives can be successful is severely limited by the neglect of the U.S. government. In other words, the American University is left scrambling to generate its own funds, is required to make tuition less and less affordable each year, and to draw in tuition-paying students by marketing the most saleable programs.

Ben: So many students have already tuned out education part way through middle school that it's hard to believe any students from impoverished areas get to college at all. If we're interested in a democratic society we must attempt to educate all students equally, not just those that somehow, through luck, enormous effort or privilege, make to higher education.

In elementary school you can learn all the skills to teach yourself for the rest of your life. Instead, students are made dependent on a teacher to pass on knowledge to them. If this doesn't work (bad teaching, over-crowded schools, etc.) students start to lose interest and never get past the most basic skills. When a huge percentage of the population have a hard time with decoding two syllable words and doing multiplication there is almost no chance for a free society.

Chris: Obviously some people are getting a decent education in their elementary years, because they end up going to the colleges that enjoy abundant funding. The real problem is the disparity in funding of elementary education that exists between rich and poor districts. Poor students just do not get the start they need in order to take advantage of higher education opportunities.

However, I really do not feel that most high school and colleges are "overfunded," and I think it is a little misguided to pit primary education against higher education. What we really need to fight for is the new desegregation—the assertion of equal access to quality education regardless of family income or community of origin. If equity were mandated and all students' elementary educations were equally funded, you can bet that the net effect would be an increase in funding at the primary level. It's the fact that rich and poor school districts/counties/states are almost completely decoupled in their funding that

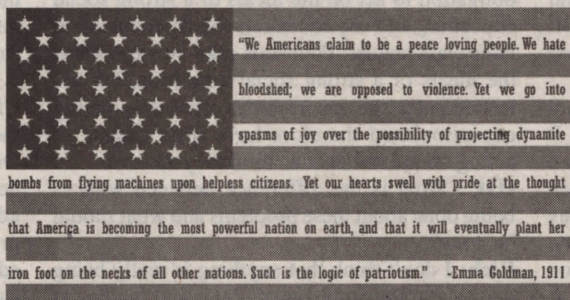
feel a great deal of privilege to just feel hopeless because if circumstances were different I could be one of the many people who are feeling mighty dead because of the invasion. That said, the huge number of U.S. citizens that have expressed their opposition to the war have got to be feeling pretty antagonistic to the current administration. And considering the current administration was not elected by the people, these same people have got to be feeling pretty damn antagonistic to the "democratic process" in this country. This is all to the good.

There was a time when I thought the stakes were too high for Bush to go to war. What I mean by that is that politicians, I believe, generally only partake in activities that won't jeopardize their reelection bids. Engaging in this war seemed so unpopular that it would be political suicide to side with Bush and thus Bush wouldn't get enough politicians behind him. Clearly, I had that one wrong. However, I do think that this war will cause a major turnover in the executive and legislative branches. Though this will not radically alter the course of the country, it can also only be to the good. Finally, the U.S. has made such a strong break with the rest of the world that we've got to hope that other countries will really begin to team up to break our power. So there is some hope to be gleaned from this absurd situation.

Rich: First of all, I refuse to call this a "war." This is an "invasion." A war requires two antagonists from its outset, even if only one initiates the combat. In this case, there was only one antagonist, the U.S. Iraq has not threatened the U.S., nor does it have the military capabilities to retaliate in kind. Its inability to retaliate is actually part of the reason why the U.S. is bombing Iraq. At the height of the Cold War the U.S. did not set off bombs in Moscow, and the U.S. has not chosen to bomb North Korea, a bonafide member of the so-called "axis of evil." North Korea actually has the kind of weaponry Bush falsely claims that Hussein has. Plus, Iraq possesses the oil that the U.S. has a very serious addiction to.

Certainly, a feeling of hopelessness has washed over me in the week and a half since the "official" start of this invasion. But this invasion was unstoppable. The unprecedented throngs of people who have taken to the streets over this issue would have been naïve to believe they could have stopped this invasion, an invasion planned in the U.S.'s blueprints for imperial rule of the Persian Gulf at least since the Carter administration. The invasion was unstoppable, but that does not mean the chorus of loud global opposition to it is unimportant. On the contrary, it is more critical now than ever before.

There are no formally democratic mechanisms in place through which civil society can register its opposition to this criminal invasion and its growing human rights atrocities. Simply put, taking to the streets everywhere and as much as possible is the only real registry for civil opposition. That is the reason why we do it, and that is why it is important. The invasion cannot be stopped, but we can still create stakes for imperialists. We can still build a critical mass, a huge international population that can begin to hold Western tyrants



results in low primary education funding overall.

HaC: The President has declared war on Iraq and now the first attacks have happened. Has a feeling of hopelessness come over any of you? What I mean is, do you feel like no matter how loud the voice of resistance is, that this was unstoppable?

Ben: I do feel hopeless at times. Of course, I still

accountable.

Chris: A "threshold effect" is something that emerges discretely from a continuous process. For instance, as air continuously cools down, eventually we reach the threshold for rain, and the skies suddenly open up and soak us. The event seems sudden, but the conditions that shape it were quite gradual. This invasion of Iraq is a threshold effect, a sudden wave of brutality brought on by a slow erosion of American values. As a punk and a skeptic, a certain part of me has always felt a bit hopeless and 'small,' because I am aware of how exploitative and brutal Americans can be. I have watched this all unfold in my lifetime, and throughout the process, I have felt powerless.

So the threshold is significant—people are dying in large numbers, and unprecedented actions are being taken on our behalf. But I think that it is really important to look at the slow process that led up to this disaster. Americans have relinquished the meaning of their vote, surrendered the airwaves and given up on independent media. Most importantly, we have stepped away from a civic, community-oriented life into a million little individualistic islands. All of these changes have allowed the powerful to become more powerful, the hateful to move further beyond reproach. It is hard to stop something with so much momentum.

As horrible as this invasion is, it is the kick in the pants that I needed to start thinking more seriously about what I have to do in order to prevent the brutal acts that are promised for the future—and it is clear to me that the most important thing that I can do is to begin to work to form my own community. I am disgusted by my own isolation, and the powerlessness that it breeds. The invasion has renewed my commitment to find those who I should stand alongside and to start working with these people to impact my local community. What else can I do?

HaC: The war brings up countless economic issues that directly impact us here at home. What effects do you think you'll see on things such as job security, education, public services, etc?

Chris: Before the invasion we were pretty fucked. We are still paying back the Reagan-era military budget deficits, and this invasion is going to totally mortgage our future. It seems pretty reasonable to predict that the pyramid schemes we have been riding will eventually collapse and we will face some hard times. But there is a part of me that says "good," because we still are a highly educated society and we still enjoy enviable food and water security. There's no reason why we can't have a really high quality of life; we just may have to give up some of the toys and gadgets that we've erroneously come to think of as "needs." So the challenge is this... as we enter a period of time where we will no longer maintain the economic dominance we once had, will we let the rich of this country choke us? Or, will we band together to provide for the common good, reclaiming those resources that belong to the people? What do you need in order to provide education, health care, food, and other public services? The answer is "people," and we will still have plenty of people; maybe we can work towards getting all those marketers and lawyers and financial consultants to expend some of their

talents helping their fellow Americans for a change.

I don't mean to be overly utopian—I want to point out that we are all privileged enough to seek something more. We know that during a major economic depression the rich elites of our country will attempt to use the economic system to destabilize solidarity movements that demand equitable distribution of resources. We have to counteract these tactics through community-based resistance.

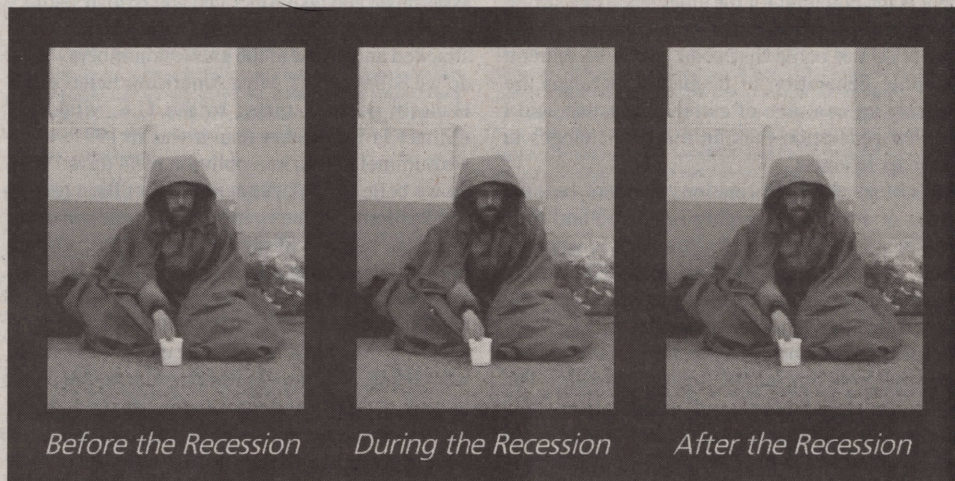
Rich: Well, the invasion will make the hawks (Perle, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Rice) in Washington billions of dollars. No longer will they have to pay \$15 per barrel of oil from the Persian Gulf whenever the OPEC countries decide to raise the prices. It costs Iraq approximately \$3 per barrel of oil, whereas for the U.S. to get oil from Venezuela or from domestic sources, they must pay anywhere from \$8 to \$10 a barrel. The U.S. takes the oil, and it gains control of the wealth of that region, becoming a more pivotal player in the Middle East. Furthermore, in November 2000, Hussein stopped trading in the \$USD, and began to trade in the Euro (perhaps one of the less publicized reasons why Europe is much less eager to join the U.S. and Britain in the invasion). This was a major blow to the U.S. economy, and it coincided with the inauguration of the Bush

budget cuts. Why is the budget being cut? Among other things, to finance attacking other countries. Every dollar counts in N.Y.C. public school and there's a huge budget cut slated for next year for N.Y.C. schools. Where has the money gone? Into Apache helicopters and Tomahawk missiles. Who gets screwed? The kids of course. So we're going to really feel it here of course. Those of us who invest in the weapons of war are going to get wealthy. Those of us who invest in children are going to sink to a new level of poverty.

HaC: What kind of reactions are you noticing in your neighborhoods, on campus, at shows, and places of employment?

Ben: I live on the border between a Hasidic community and a Latino one. The Latino community is largely against the war. Protests have been widely publicized in stores and around the neighborhood. As the Hasidic community has extremely strong ties with Israel, they are almost completely unified in a pro-war stance.

At my school, all of the teachers seem to be anti-war. That's not all that strange considering we're a group of relatively like-minded individuals. What is strange is that the majority of the students are also anti-war. Even though they read tabloid newspapers and watch corporate news, they are still anti-war. This has changed somewhat since the beginning of the



administration as well as with the words "recession" passing through Greenspan's filthy lips. The basic economic victory that the U.S. will win is control of the second largest reserve of inexpensive oil, next to Saudi Arabia. It is actually not cheap at all when you consider how much murder has already taken place only one week into this invasion (227 Iraqi civilians killed by 3/27/03). But our government does not count human life into its currency.

However, the struggling people of this country will not feel this victory at all. Gas prices will change, but job security, education and public services will continue to flounder and fail for the lowest income members of our society. This is especially true since this invasion will not change any of Bush's new domestic budget—a budget designed to further impoverish the poor by giving more and more breaks and incentives to the rich.

Ben: Since I teach I'm thinking primarily about the effect this will have on education. Tuition at the City University of New York (a group of colleges spread out across NYC) has gone up by 100% in 10 years. This has happened because of

invasion but they mostly still think Bush is "stupid" and that this would never have happened if Clinton were still in office or if Gore had become the president. Regardless of the accuracy of that particular line of thought, they are definitely anti-Bush.

Rich: My neighborhood is interesting. There is a large immigrant population of orthodox Jews here, many from Israel and many Russian Jews, too. There are many displays of support for Ariel Sharon and for his brutal repression and murder of Palestinians in my neighborhood (newspapers, bumper stickers, signs in shop windows), which is not so much a Jewish thing, but in America, it is often made out to be. This invasion is supported by most Americans who support Sharon because of the reckless lumping together of all Arab peoples as a common enemy.

Mostly, I have stickered up my opposition to this invasion in the subways of my neighborhood. I actually don't want to talk to my neighbors about this issue at all. I do believe in engaging your community and particularly your opponents, but I also believe that one must pick

one's battles very cautiously. My father disagrees with all of my political ideas, for example, and I have learned the tragic lesson that I should not be talking to him about such things. People need to express some degree of openness to hearing what I have to say in order for me to feel an invitation for constructive dialogue.

I don't go to shows, mostly because folks who have been dead for a long time now play all the music that I listen to these days. But, I work at New School University, where I am also a student. Even though the place is now run by a war criminal (former Senator Bob Kerrey), I am soothed and kept sane by all of the radical voices of reason, peace and solidarity that I find there. Everyone needs that, and I am so grateful to have it. Also, I work in NYC, a city where a new radicalism is fomenting around this issue.

Chris: I spend most of my time at a large University, where resistance to the war (and to the domestic policies of George W. Bush) is vocal and abundant. People are really pissed off, and there is a sense of disillusionment not only regarding the war but with our current republicrat political system as a whole. I really hope that these feelings—which I know have not yet reached the rest of America—can be spread before the 2004 elections. As an anarchist, I tend to be cynical about our elective process, but I think that there is the potential for the emergence of a strong third-party presence in the next election. If the results do not come that soon, I will be patient; an entire generation of talented Americans are growing up in a time of extreme injustice, and I see that generation making massive changes in the years to come.

HaC: Most major information providers, be it the media or school, are highly regulated and only provide a small version of a "truth." How do you think, especially now, this is affecting the public and more importantly the next generation growing up into this mess/capitalist world?

Rich: There is absolutely nothing, and I mean nothing, more important than the media. The proliferation of ideas and information, of a diversity of interpretations, of experiences and history, is truly the only thing that can radically reconfigure the political understanding of this and subsequent generations in the U.S. Other things are important, but it is media that normalizes the thinking of a society en masse. It is the media that creates the margins. If you disagree with the media, then you must stand in the margins, for it is the media that constructs the common sense of the populace on the largest scale.

American media is the worst media in the entire world. Al Jazeera, BBC, Reuters, I'm not even counting left wing media alternatives here, are mainstream in other countries, and they are actually very good. BBC is the UK's equivalent to ABC, and the difference could not be vaster. Sometimes, when I watch BBC news after seeing ABC I feel like I just stumbled onto the Revolutionary Communist Party's pirated TV broadcast. In reality, BBC is just really balanced reportage. That's how bad American media is—it makes balanced and objective reportage look like left wing propaganda. It's fucking ridiculous and infuriating. I'm so pissed about it that typing out this response, I feel like my fingers are going to bust through the keyboard.

Especially right now. CNN was just

kicked out of the Persian Gulf by the Iraqi Minister of Information for its one-sidedness in favor of this U.S. invasion. Of course they were kicked out. After all, in order for CNN to get their reporters "embedded," which means on site at actual military posts in Iraq, they had to agree to follow reportage criterion set by the Pentagon. The fucking Pentagon!!! The Pentagon is not some unbiased body seeking to secure fairness and accuracy in reporting. The Pentagon is where the architects for this invasion sit, and following their criterion is what gave CNN reporters access to military sites, reporters who had to agree not to be critical of the invasion. The *New York Times*, a newspaper that came out with an editorial opposing this invasion on the grounds of its unilateralism, is a so-called liberal news source. But they printed the full text of Bush's 3/19/03 speech on their front page, and they only printed Senator Robert Byrd's dissenting speech because a wealthy philanthropist paid them to print it. That's how shitty American media is.

All this has a gross effect on the public. Most Americans believe that Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, a bare falsity that not a single person in the Bush administration has ever substantiated. Why do we believe this? Most Americans believe that Iraqis are savages (this is from a *New York Post* headline) when they assassinate and take American and British soldiers prisoner, even though it is the Iraqis who are being attacked and killed in the greatest numbers. Why do we believe this? Most Americans believe that Hussein poses a threat to the U.S. when his military is 1/3 weaker than it was in 1991, when we pummeled Iraq into oblivion in 44 days. Why do we believe this? A quarter of a million people need to demonstrate against this invasion in order to get as much coverage as 10 morons pouring French wine down sewers in an idiotic boycott. Why is this the case? Because our commercial media is a shit factory, that's why.

My hope is that the culture of learning will change. My hope is that our culture will begin to seek out news and information on the Internet before watching and reading tabloid news. If people get fed up enough with the quality of their news, which they are starting to do, I believe they will look elsewhere for it. I have to believe that, because it is the only thing that keeps me hopeful for the future.

Chris: Obviously media obfuscation is a major problem. It is amazing how effective truth can be—if you can get a person who was weaned on mainstream media to listen for just a few minutes, you would be surprised by the effect that the real facts can have on his or her opinions. At this point the propaganda that is perpetrated as journalism is becoming more and more transparent to more and more people, and this is causing many of us to give up on mainstream media. Those of us who know that we are being lied to have to speak out and tell the truth. The new generation is aware that they are constantly being told lies from all sides... the challenge is to convince them that some things are true, and to disseminate these truths in a straightforward, spin-free manner.

I think that it also pays to realize that people believe what they want to be true, even when these beliefs fly in the face of logic. We want to believe that the people who flew the planes into the World Trade Center towers were

religious fanatics who envy our sophisticated, affluent way of life. We certainly don't want to think that our actions, past and present, are the cause of the global resistance we now face. Believing that we are "liberators" and that those who resist us are "terrorists" just allows us to go on living our exploitative, selfish lives. The slant of public education and commercial media is great, but the biases inherent in these sources of information are pretty obvious to those who care to look. Most Americans simply feel more comfortable resting on the slant provided. Our job, as conscious Americans, is to dislodge this comfortable seat by spreading the truth.

Ben: The media is supposed to be the fourth branch of the government. They are supposed to watch over and blow whistles. But since they are paid by the same people who pay those in office, we shouldn't be surprised that there is very little mainstream journalism in the U.S. We have a lot of mainstream right-wing propaganda but very little that could properly be called journalism. So the public is largely misinformed and easily manipulated. My mother watched the CBC (Canadian Broadcast Corporation) and couldn't believe it was reporting on the same war. If the media was properly regulated and independent we wouldn't have U.S. hegemony. End of story.

HaC: So why a free jazz approach to punk?

Rich: The key values of hardcore/punk were not created by hardcore/punk at all. The American free jazz players made a decision in the late 1950s—early 1960s, that melody and time keeping were not required for making good music. They realized that the spiritual quality of blowing all their feelings and frustrations out through horns and drums and basses, responding spontaneously to each other, was a political act.

First, it challenged mainstream jazz, which at that time was a major part of the music industry. Second, the very form of the music was a statement about music and about life, a statement that said that the musicians esteemed in mainstream culture were "less real" and were far too controlled by the marketing of jazz to whites. This was all very punk, or proto-punk, in the sense that their music fucked with the music industry and introduced a "new music" that no music industry has yet figured out how to sell, not even 45 years later! The other proto-punk aspect of this music is that they were banned and excluded from jazz clubs and hated by jazz record labels. Their response was to play loft and basement shows and to release their own records! Sound familiar? Aside from the political and spiritual implications of playing free music, improvisation is the most free you can get in actually playing music with other people. Punk has always esteemed the idea of freedom, and yet, its music has long been constrained to reproducing hackneyed old sounds and styles that don't even ask the players to invent or to create anymore.

Hardcore/punk has a long history of reproducing fetishized styles that, over the decades, have mutated in various ways into new styles. But, where are all the horns, the homemade instruments, where are the challenges from within hardcore/punk being leveled against hardcore/punk itself? Quite simply, a free jazz approach to punk is the most punk thing I can think of.

Ben: Aside from what Rich said (which I agree with completely) we all like the sound of

improvising. We listen to improvised music and we love it so why wouldn't we try to incorporate it into the music we play? Making rules about how a band is going to sound is a little weird I think. This is why we joke about our releases sounding like comps.

When we get together to play music we are able to satisfy which ever musical urge comes to us. Additionally, improvised music is so much more democratic. Just because someone plays drums or bass shouldn't relegate her to a secondary position in a band. It also shouldn't dictate how you play your instrument. Improvisation (done right) does away with this. All is permissible. And everyone must always be listening and reacting to what others are doing. We try not to stamp on what someone else is doing but we always attempt to assert ourselves into the mix.

Chris: The reasons are many, and vary from practical to political. First and foremost, I like to play improvised music (a better description of what we do than "free jazz") because 'free' music is much more in line with the politics of punk than most punk music turns out to be. In one realm—sound—I think that hardcore/punk got it right, emphasizing dirty and sometimes messy playing over virtuosity. But in another realm—structure—hardcore/punk seems to be going against its own stated nature. Most punk bands maintain rigid song structures, designed to be played with precision and consistency every time (we like to call bands that deliver on this promise "tight"—how weirdly ironic!). The hardcore/punk song produced in this manner looks not unlike a fast food burger or a laptop computer—consistent (at best) but never interesting or particularly surprising, inflexible and subordinate to a particular method.

Playing music that is free in nature is one way to harmonize anarchist lyrical sentiments with the music that accompanies them. It is also a means of allowing a band to evolve rapidly and continuously. When songs are created in assembly-line fashion, the investment involved in production dictates that a particular set of songs and lyrics be continuously reproduced until a new 'design' (read: new band sound) is adopted and a new 'product line' (read: new release/set of songs) is forwarded. This means that bands have to write songs that will work in the months or years that follow the long process of writing, recording, and/or production. A band that plays improvised music can create meaningful music on the spot, incorporate timely lyrics written the week before, and constantly evolve their 'sound' as the environment dictates. This kind of freedom is what I want out of punk.

HaC: You've moved from structured/planned songs to improvised ones. What do you feel you accomplish by extending punk even further into a new realm?

Rich: On a personal level, improvisation is far more rewarding. It just feels better. Regarding punk, I hope improvisation in punk helps to expand the way that hardcore/punk groups approach making music. It encourages exploration and transgression from common

structures. Improvised hardcore/punk is certainly not any more marketable... If anything, it is less marketable. What you accomplish, in the best case scenario, is you demonstrate new possibilities. We have not been very successful at improvising great sets live, actually. But to me, the hope is not necessarily to become great at it, but rather to inspire others to do what we do better than we do it, to pick up wherever we leave off, to create something newer and better. If hardcore/punk doesn't change radically, people will graduate from it. I am 29 years old and would probably be bored stiff by hardcore/punk if there weren't people in it trying to new and totally unusual things.

Chris: One does not have to watch MTV2 or MuchMusic for longer than a half hour to recognize that the sounds of hardcore/punk have been almost completely co-opted by mainstream popular music. Because we are all now exposed to 'punk sounds,' it just doesn't provoke the way it used to. Pissing off one's parents is hardly the pinnacle of punk rock achievement, but when the sounds of hardcore/punk are indistinguishable from the sounds of Top 40 songs, we need to reconsider how we employ this 30-year-old paradigm. Bands whose message that I love—Rage Against the Machine or Propagandhi—have shown that the erosion of difference between punk and pop sounds has lead to a concurrent loss of lyrical impact; the message and the medium are now skewed because the medium has been

way to extend the borders of the current one beyond the limits of commercial music.

So by playing 'free' music, I hope that we can inspire other bands—who may have a greater potential to reach a wider audience—to adopt more radical musical paradigms. I also hope that the few people that listen to Countdown To Putsch begin to recognize that free music is a lot more true to the anarchist nature of DIY punk than the traditional structured approach.

Ben: I think we put our form and content together more seamlessly. If our lyrics profess radical politics but the music is one step away from MTV, there's a cognitive disconnect that affects the message. And the message is the whole point. We are trying to stimulate thought and action. Playing the same old thing doesn't seem to do that very well.

HaC: By adding books with all your releases you extend being educators into the punk scene. Can bands still be educators?

Chris: I hope that most bands that care about their lyrical content would argue that you don't need a ton of supplementary material in order to promote thought and seed new ideas (we'll be making that argument with our next release, which does not come with supplementary content beyond the lyrics). Including supplementary material is a way to express ideas that don't easily conform to musical constraints, and obviously we are big fans of this approach. However, I think that bands still have a huge potential to educate their audience—

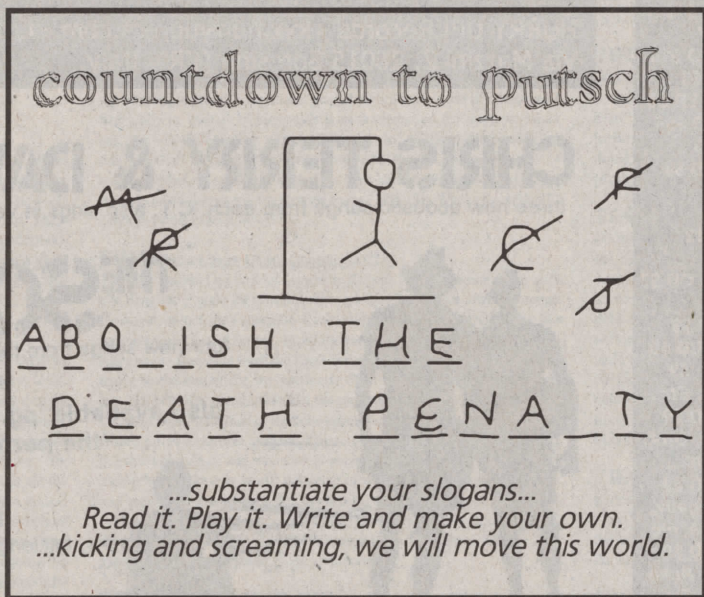
even through simple lyrics—because people will actually listen to what bands have to say. The audience for these bands does not need to be reminded that bands can be educators by having 100-page books shoved down their throats—it's the bands that need to wake up and realize that what they say in their music actually impacts people. If people are willing to listen to a band, that band can educate.

Rich: If bands can be a part of the proliferation of new ideas, then yes, they can be educators. In fact, much of my political understanding has come from listening to political music. I have learned so much of what I believe from bands. I have learned about ways to live and ways to think that I would not have encountered outside of the hardcore/punk subculture, and so it is really

not controversial at all to say that many of my best teachers were hardcore/punk bands.

Ben: I can point to particular records that taught me a specific ideological point that radically transformed my thinking and even sometimes my behavior. In that sense, bands can very much be educators. I think the books are an attempt to show what bands are capable of doing. They don't have to keep to the stage, to jewel cases, to touring, etc. They can be much, much more. Much, much more than we are certainly.

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appropriated by mainstream commercial culture.

That recognized, I am not ready to say that free, improvised music is the total solution to the problem of musical co-option. It is one solution, and it is our solution. By introducing free music, we maintain the potential to inspire new (often younger) kids to see the differences between anarchist music and capitalist music. I got into punk bands because they offered a tantalizingly refreshing sound, and was lead towards their politics by this novelty. I do not think that structured guitar-bass-drums music can accomplish this critical transition anymore because the medium has been sucked up by the commercial amoeba. In order to inspire, we need to make something different again. If you aren't going to create the new genre, you'd better find a



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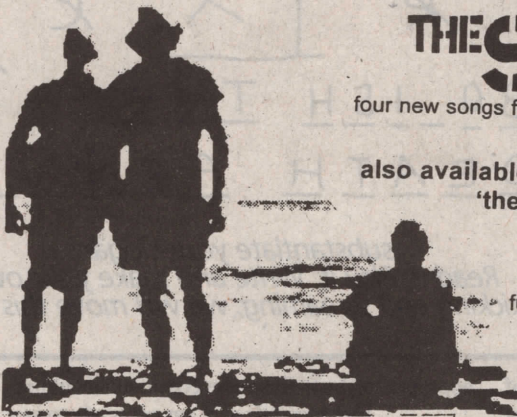
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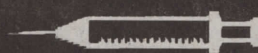
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GUYANA PUNCH LINE

*An interview with
Chris Bickel of
Guyana Punch Line.
Interview and photo
by Jonathan Lee.*

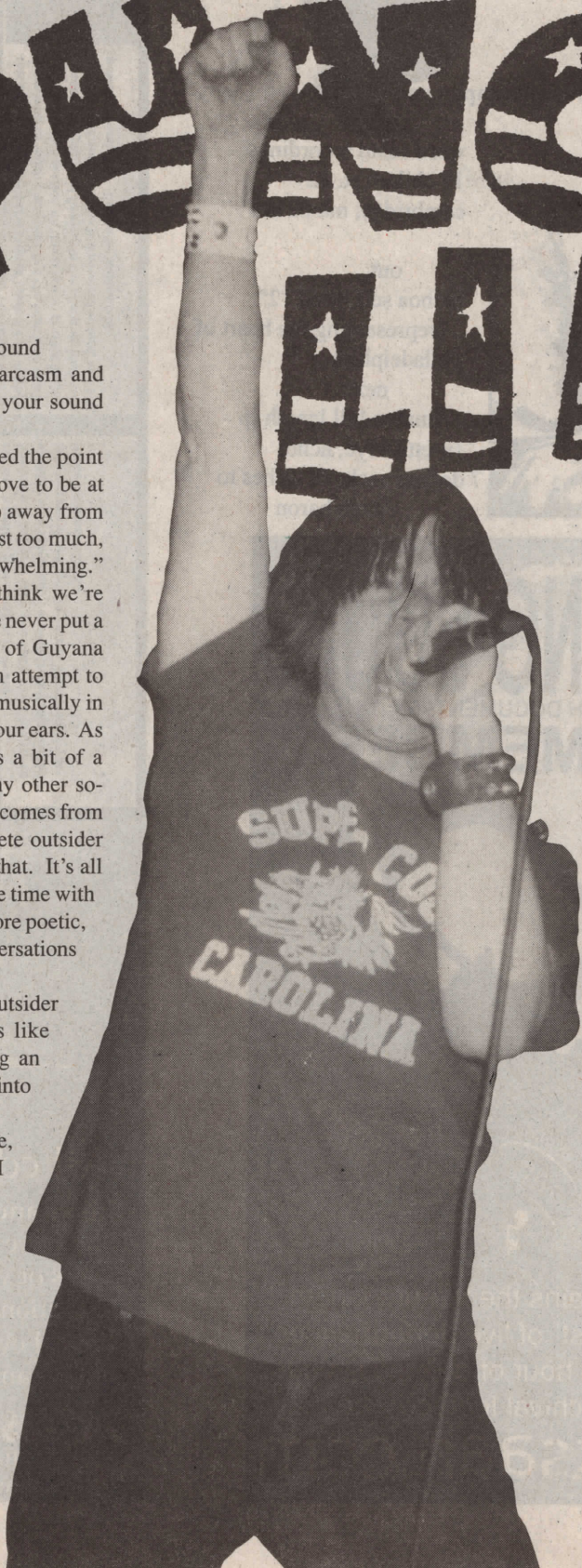
HaC: Guyana Punch Line has been called "overwhelming" with your chaotic sound and sometime poorly understood sarcasm and wit. How does this approach effect your sound and lyrics?

Chris: I don't think we've approached the point of being "overwhelming" yet. I'd love to be at that point. I'd love to be able to step away from Guyana Punch Line and say "that's just too much, I can't take it... this is absolutely overwhelming." At the point where we are now I think we're nothing more than "whelming." I've never put a lot of thought into the "approach" of Guyana Punch Line. I think our sound is an attempt to reconstruct the things that please us musically in such a way that it sounds original to our ears. As far as the lyrics go, I'd say there's a bit of a different perspective than what many other so-called "political" bands are giving. It comes from a life-long feeling of being a complete outsider and having a sense of humor about that. It's all very off-the-cuff. If I spent a bit more time with the lyrics, they'd probably be a bit more poetic, but as they are they're more like conversations I'd have with myself.

HaC: Is it this feeling of being an outsider that influences lyrics about things like suicide or other topics? Was being an outsider the reason you were drawn into punk?

Chris: I was drawn to punk because, yes, feeling on the outside of things I identified with the lyrics and sounds that were coming out of bands like Black Flag and the Dead Kennedys. I don't know if I've ever identified much with the punk scene per-se, but I've definitely encountered more worthwhile people associated with this form of music than in any other genre, scene, or counterculture, or whatever. As far as your question about suicidal lyrics, well, if I happen to have a

deathwish at any given time it's helpful to make something constructive out of it instead of actually going through with the act. It's a way of releasing the feeling into the atmosphere instead of acting rashly upon it. And, yes, I suppose those kind of feelings are a part of



feeling like I just don't fit in with the rest of the world. Oh, we're all such tortured artists, aren't we!

HaC: What are you all trying to accomplish or say with Guyana that other bands aren't?

Chris: We've never written a song trying to pander to the whims of a target audience. Even within our tiny little subculture, we'd be lot more popular if we threw in some hooky mosh-parts and D-beat madness. We just wanna do what we like and if other people appreciate it, then that's an added bonus. There's maybe been a conscious effort on our part to avoid genericism, but I think every aspect of what we do is realistically comparable to something else that's come before us. To be honest, there's nothing really all that special about Guyana Punch Line. Perhaps that's what sets us apart from other bands: we're the first to tell you that there's nothing really all that great about our band. We just do what we do. What would I like to accomplish with that? Well, it's always nice to convey ideas or messages... but more importantly, everyone in this band is poor. We can't afford therapy or prescribed drugs (and believe me, we're all fucking crazy)... so this band is first and foremost a cathartic form of therapy for four guys that cannot afford psychoanalysis.

HaC: Humor seems to be a huge part in your bands, past and present. Explain that approach and why it's important.

Chris: I can sum it up with one of my favorite quotes: "I laughed to keep from crying." People probably give me more credit for being "funny"

than I deserve. A lot of what people construe as "funny" is actually me trying to convey something serious in my uneducated Southern poor white trash way. It just comes out "funny" I guess.

HaC: When your lyrics are political they still seem humor or fun oriented, for instance smashism. Explain "smashism" and the concept behind it (as something serious or a joke).

Chris: Smashism is better left discovered than explained. "Fun" is important to me though. The world sucks enough as it is, so if the things you do to put the world out of your head (or to criticize the world around you) aren't FUN, then what's the point? That's part of smashism, I suppose. Smashing down that which takes the FUN out of your life.

HaC: Hardcore in the South seems to be struggling and the scenes here are smaller, yet it's our surrounding that makes the hardcore bands so uniquely wonderful. How does being from the South affect your music?

Chris: There are lots of factors. You've got the oppressive ideals of the Southern Baptists. You've got the extreme poverty. We live in one of the poorest states in the nation. Mostly, you've got the total lack of culture and arts. Our band comes out of living in an area that's repressed religiously, monetarily, and culturally. Most people in the South turn to either the Church or drugs and alcohol... a handful turn to punk rock. You've got to seek solace in something.

HaC: How all do you feel the south is impacted by things like lack of arts and education? Is it these things that reinforce poverty and the totally service based job market?

Chris: Lack of education definitely reinforces poverty. That's a given. The lack of support for the arts in a lot of smaller Southern towns probably doesn't have a tremendous impact on the day to day lives of folks. It just means that people have fewer outlets to express themselves. I don't view this as one of the great problems our society faces. It just means that "artists" will have to work a second job to support themselves. This really isn't that big of a deal as far as I'm concerned. I'm more concerned about the huge gap between the rich and the poor in the South. I suppose this is left over from the pre-Civil War economy of wealthy plantation owners and the folks that toiled for them. I'm no sociologist or economist, so I'm not really qualified to discuss these matters. The South is not much different from the rest of the world in the respect that you have a few rich folks exploiting a much greater number of poor folks. Punk rock can be a (fun) reaction to that.

HaC: Do you feel like punk can be an educator itself? Or is it all just preaching to the converted, distanced away from that?

Chris: It's easy to see a lot of punk lyrics as "preaching to the converted," but a lot of us forget that at one time we were young kids and were not exposed to the kinds of issues addressed by many punk bands. I was definitely educated by bands like Crass and Conflict and the Dead

Kennedys. There's always some new kid out there that may find inspiration in what you're screaming about. That's about the only thing keeping punk relevant after all these years.

HaC: South Carolina seems to be dealing with the Christian infiltration most other Southern scenes are dealing with as well. In a small scene, how do you fit in and how do things stay together?

Chris: I'm not sure if you're talking about Christianity in general or Christianity in the punk scene. Most of the punks in Columbia are Christian punks. That's the biggest thing going in our town. I think Christianity is antithetical to punk rock, however some of those kids are GPL fans and come to our shows. I guess the good thing about them being Christians is that they have to forgive us of our "trespasses," but we can still be in total opposition to their cause. We can be dicks, and they have to be nice because Jesus said so. Guyana Punch Line definitely doesn't "fit" in our home scene, but luckily we're "forgiven" by the crusty kids that have the anti-abortion patches on their pants. Some of those kids are really nice and despite our philosophical differences I'd consider them friends, but I do my best to ignore religion because when I think about it I just tend to get pissed off. Religions based on love tend to kill more people than just about anything else you care to name. I got into punk as a reaction to a religious upbringing.

HaC: So why do you think kids so "in touch" with something so a part of the social status quo feel drawn to a punk scene that is supposed to be counter culture? And once a part of it what are the justifications? What has opened punk up to a more hot topic, right wing sided youth?

Chris: It's because punk isn't so removed from the status quo anymore. It's all over MTV and *Rolling Stone*. I wouldn't say punk has opened up to more of a "right wing sided youth" as much as it's just opened up to a section of kids that wouldn't know the difference between left and right wing. Punk in this decade serves the same purpose that hair metal served in the '80s. It's a marketable form of rebellion.

HaC: Many are saying punk is dead. After touring all over the United States do you believe that to be true? How has punk evolved for better and for worse?

Chris: Crass first said that "punk is dead" and that was back in 1978. Then The Exploited proclaimed that "punk's not dead" a year or two later. Twenty some-odd years on, who do you believe? I think the ideals of punk are alive, but they're the same ideals that various Dadaists and Situationists and Beatniks and Yippies held. I guess we call those ideals "punk" now out of convenience. If you wanna think of punk as simply mohawks and bondage pants, then yeah... I'd say "punk is dead." It's just American Graffiti-style nostalgia. If you wanna believe that it's alive, I'd say it is on a philosophical level... however, I'd say the biggest thing LACKING in punk now is originality and creativity. In the early days of punk, no two bands sounded alike and everyone was trying to be an

individual. Punk rock has too much conformity and hero worship nowadays.

More specifically this is what pisses me off about the current state of "punk": when bands try to use an established genre/scene/pigeonhole to ride to success without putting forth any creative effort to make something unique. I'm not denying that Guyana Punch Line doesn't have readily apparent influences, but GPL never tried to ride the emo train or the crusty train or the str8edge train to stardom. It's just too easy for a million bands to say "we're an emo band" and then have an automatic built-in audience of "emo" kids that are gonna support them. They don't have to do anything different than their hero bands because they are riding the coat-tails of the scene that's been built up around that particular genre.

I've always distrusted scenes and cliques. That's why I've never tried to make a band that FIT into any particular scene. As Groucho Marx used to say: "I'd never join a club that would have me as a member."

To sum it all up, I guess I'm just trying to say that I don't like it when bands who have nothing new to offer try to use their association with a clique to gain an audience (and thereby water-down the quality of bands putting out records and touring). One of the reasons not-so-many kids go to shows these days is because they've seen one-too-many boring bad bands.

Guyana Punch Line is not really above all of this. We're just a third rate Die Kruezen meets Rudimentary Peni meets Born Against meets The Feederz band trying to cash in on the nationwide Smashism movement. All we really want is your money so we can go out and buy some high-water pants, bowling shoes, and white belts. Now what were we talking about? Oh yeah. "Is punk dead?" Uh, yeah. I'd have to say so. "Punk is dead, long live Emo": so sayeth *Time Magazine* and *Rolling Stone* and MTV and this month's sampler CD from The Limited.

HaC: So if punk is dead, what are you a part of?

Chris: We adhere to the tenets of Omniversal Smashist Consciousness while playing a fast thrash-based form of music that is easily labeled "punk." I would be hesitant to call myself a "punk" anymore because I can't readily define the term. I'd hate to call myself a "punk" and have it conjure an image of Blink 182 in someone else's head. Where we're coming from has fuck-all to do with that. We just do what we do and people can call it whatever they like. I don't really feel like I'm a "part" of anything. Like I said, I've never been a joiner. Just because I share some of the same ideologies as some stinky dudes with berkenstocks and dreads doesn't mean I wanna be in their club. Guyana Punch Line is more like an independent terror cell than part of the punk religion.

Contact us at: Guyana Punch Line/PO Box 50454/Columbia, SC 29250; <http://www.angelfire.com/sc2/smashism/> New LP called Direkt Aktion on Prank soon...

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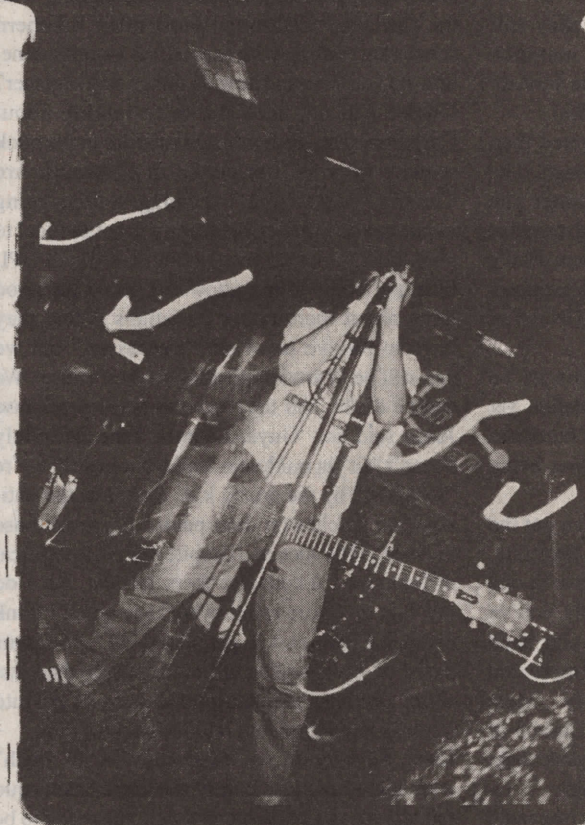
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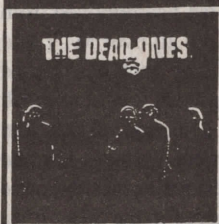
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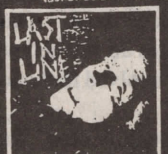
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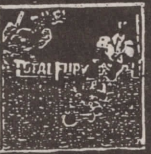
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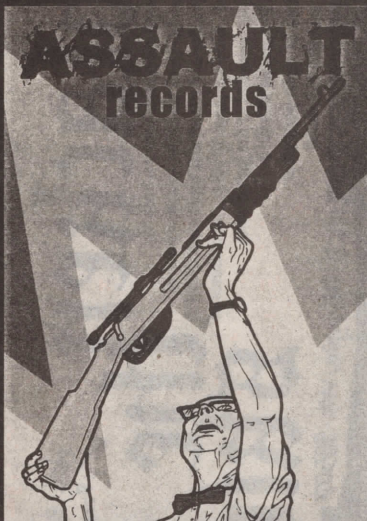
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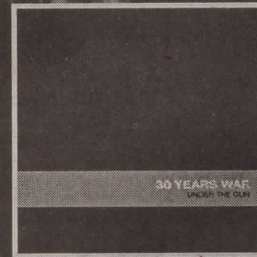
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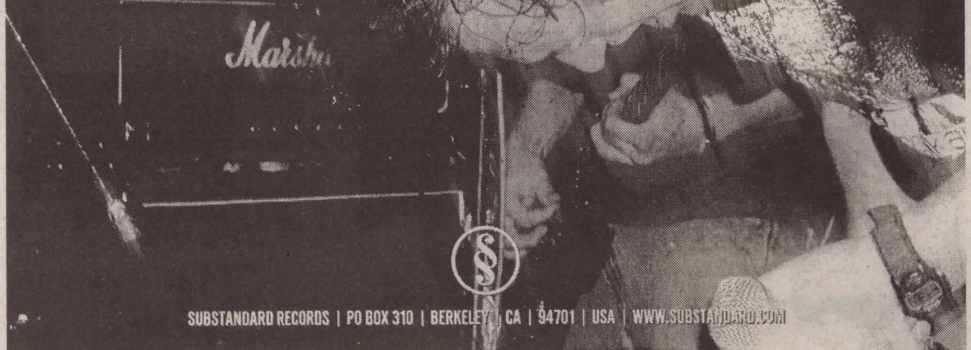
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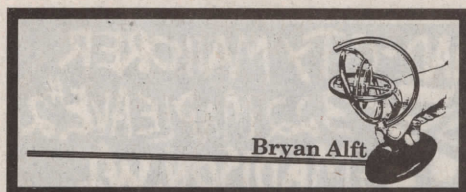
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I could probably write for days about what is happening in the world today and what we need to do to stop it. I'm flooded with rage when I read the letters in the paper meant to mock those of us who protest this war. They gloat, "Where are the protestors now?" as if they knew anything of the Middle East that the Fox News propaganda machine didn't tell them. "Victory" is supposed to somehow justify the attack?

What a shock—the U.S. won the "war!" Was there ever any doubt that the world's only superpower with a military larger than the next 5 or 6 countries combined—would easily stomp on a country that has been under embargo and regular bombings for 12 years? Other than a PR victory, knocking down a statue outside a hotel full of reporters in Baghdad is just the beginning of this mess.

A few short months ago, the majority of Americans polled were hesitant about an aggressive U.S. military drive into Iraq. But, slowly the media helped Bush and his war-happy thugs convince us that we had to protect ourselves from the growing threat of weapons of mass destruction. Fear has worked so well in the past to drive a political agenda; foreigners, communism, crime, drugs, rock and roll, but nothing has worked as well as the tragedy of 9/11. Unheard of restrictions on personal freedoms, attacks on environmental protections, immense tax cuts and budgetary shifts that reward the wealthy and strip protections for everyone else have all occurred while people are distracted with endless "orange alerts" and memorials.

As I write this, the military has yet to find the weapons of mass destruction used to justify our illegal attack on Iraq. As a back-up justification, the Bush administration has embraced "liberation" of the oppressed people of Iraq. No word yet when we will attack nations in the "coalition of the willing" whose citizens lack democratic representation and suffer human rights abuses.

It is hard not to get bitter and shut it all off. The things going on in this world in the past few months are enough to make me want to give up. But, I am going to try and be optimistic and state a list of demands for us in the minority to strive for. A guy can dream, can't he?

1. The Constitution and Bill of Rights will be respected above and beyond any anti-terrorism efforts. This seems obvious, but the U.S. Patriot Act took a huge chunk of our freedoms with no congressional committee review or most members of congress even reading it. A recently leaked draft of Attorney General Ashcroft's wish list for Patriot II is even more alarming. If Ashcroft gets his way, the government would be granted the ability to strip an American of their citizenship, a DNA database of suspects would be created, and individuals could be imprisoned while their names could be kept secret. The Justice department has been unresponsive to congressional requests about how

new powers granted through Patriot I are being used, and so they certainly do not deserve more. Instead, Senator Hatch of Utah is leading the charge to have Patriot I's provisions—many of which were written to expire in 2005 because of their controversial nature—permanent even before they are proven effective or constitutional.

2. All Americans will be allowed the freedom to speak their minds without fear of reprisal. This includes a celebrity or the guy who lives down the street. Blacklisting is an embarrassment of American history we need not relive. Branding someone as "unpatriotic" or "un-American" should be completely unacceptable and scorned as repulsive citizens of a democracy. Nothing makes me want to buy a Dixie Chicks CD more than intolerant "good Americans" smashing CDs in the street.

3. The Bush doctrine of preemptive attacks on other nations will stop immediately. This arrogant and laughable effort to disguise imperialism as self-defense doesn't cut it except among American cable news viewers. Vague threats toward Syria, a country called a collaborator in the war on terrorism a few short months ago, and toward Iran, where a movement for democratic reform is brewing, is simply foolish. Such brutish actions do nothing but increase the anger, fear and fanaticism of Muslims throughout the world and damage efforts for peace. Setting a precedent for preemption opens the door to countless military conflicts throughout the world under a hollow justification that erodes the root of international law.

4. The reconstruction of Iraq—and Afghanistan—must be in collaboration with the citizens of these nations and the international community. The governments that will lead Iraq and Afghanistan should be democratically chosen by their citizens and not dictated to by the Bush administration and corporate interests. The people of Iraq were the first to nationalize their oil industry and that system should not be tampered with by the U.S. under the guise of the IMF and the World Bank. The international community, lead by the United Nations should play a significant role in the reconstruction of Iraq. The Bush administration's promises to Afghanistan should no longer be neglected, and be given the attention that a nation full of oil wells would receive. As Iraq and Afghanistan redevelop and institute their own system of government, the U.S. should withdraw with the ultimate goal of having no permanent military presence in either nation.

5. War will be recognized as the horrible force it is and not used as a justification for political or financial gain. War destroys lives and civilizations and should not be taken so lightly that simple greed is enough to lead one to wage it. The shame that should befall the political leaders of this country for their short-sighted opportunism is immeasurable. Congress hasn't hesitated to increase the military budget and throw in endless special interest extras while trying to gut the social safety net and weaken protections on the environment. George Bush's aggressive push to enact enormous tax cuts for the wealthy while the American people are distracted with the prospect of their children coming home in body bags is despicable. Corporate America clamored to sell weapons

systems to use in the destruction of Iraq and is now there to reap the profits of contracts to reconstruct it. Of course, those corporations with the most money to donate political leaders are the first allowed in the door. This opportunism cheapens the lives lost on both sides of this war. It is time that our political leaders—and all Americans—wake up to what we as Americans are all a party to: the thousands of civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq. War must be represented for the monstrosity it is, not a sterile flag-filled show of courage on the evening news.

6. The peoples of the Middle East must be respected as human beings with the right of self-determination. We must no longer manipulate governments in pursuit of economic gain. The Western world's history of interference in this region has lead to dictators such as Saddam Hussein and bred distrust and hatred of the US. Aiding Israel in the oppression of the Palestinian people and prolonging war and misery for both sides of that conflict has not helped the image of the U.S. either. This history has only served to help breed terrorism against the West. We, in turn, strike militarily in the name of "self-defense" and, in turn, breed more distrust and hatred. (And the cycle repeats.) Of course, **7. Long-term care for members of the U.S. military will be given more than lip service.** Members of the working class of this country look to the armed services to provide opportunities that are less and less available to them in our society. What these citizens do not need is to be lead into war under hollow pretenses, injured or made sick and then neglected. You'd think with all the talk coming from Washington about the brave men and women in the U.S. armed services that they would be taken care of, but history has shown this is rarely the case. The first Gulf War conflict left thousands of U.S. personnel with Gulf War Syndrome, an illness suspected of being the result of exposure to chemicals in the burning oil fields of Kuwait, radiation from DU warheads, vaccinations, and possibly chemical weapons. It has taken years for the harm that came to these soldiers to be recognized. Over a decade later, 167,000 veterans are on disability from Gulf War Syndrome. Reports are already coming in of soldiers in Iraq not being properly protected and beginning to show signs of illness. Shockingly, as soldiers are fighting and dying in Iraq, Congress has been cutting benefits for members of the military.

8. The airwaves must be used to serve their true owners, the citizens of the US. How dare the government and media elite dictate to us their convenient version of international politics and their sanitized vision of war. Participants in a real democracy deserve to be respected and need the real, unvarnished information in order for them to make informed decisions about the direction of their country. Military experts connected to weapons manufacturers and embedded reporters censured by military PR minders do not serve the public interest. Propaganda is not news and selling it as such should result in the forfeiture of access to the airwaves.

9. The U.S. will no longer ever wage war on another country without full approval by Congress. Members of Congress were far too eager to cede its most important responsibility—as a brake on a president's warrior impulses—to the whims of George W. Bush. It is time these

"representatives" actions reflected the mood of the people (before they have their emotions and opinions twisted by an onslaught of half-truths and propaganda).

10. There must be universal health care for all citizens of Iraq and the US. Believe it or not, part of the plan for rebuilding Iraq seems to be universal care. I'm all for it, but if it can happen in a shattered Iraq, it can certainly happen in the wealthiest nation in the world. According to the American Medical Student Association, over 74 million Americans are without healthcare coverage.

11. The restoration and protection of the cultural heritage and environments of these nations must be an absolute priority. US arrogance should not result in the erasure of an entire nation's cultural history. The location and return of antiquities looted from Iraqi museums must be a priority. Environmental damage caused by the bombing of these nations should be cleaned up as well. Toxic and radioactive waste and unexploded ordnance need to be removed as soon as possible. The loss of even one civilian life in Iraq due to the US military's careless use of cluster bombs or radioactive DU warheads is unacceptable.

Bryan Alft/*Contrascience*/PO Box 8344/Minneapolis, MN 55408/USA; balf@isd.net

Casey Boland

RAIN.....

"Yo, you see some kids run by here?"

"No, uh, I didn't see any kids."

"Goddamn kids settin' off the fire alarm. Goddamn! Hear that? They do it every damn day, damn kids."

I freeze my stare towards the Western horizon, awaiting the trolley. To shield myself from the punishing downpour, I hide beneath the awning at the entrance of an apartment building on Chester Ave. I'm waiting for the #13 trolley and it is nowhere in sight. It's Saturday morning, February, cold. And the rain is unrelenting. The drops sound like bullets pounding against the pavement and car roofs. I'm soaked through the skin from the one block walk to this stop.

And the fire alarm began screaming as soon as I walked up. A woman, a very kind woman I might add, said hello, commented on the weather, and went inside the building. Soon afterwards said alarm sounded. Whatever, I am cold and wet and the adventure has only just begun.

When the trolley arrives, I realize I cannot find the token. Fuck. I scramble, with umbrella hanging from one hand and the other frantically sifting through my pockets. Instantaneously I am drenched. As I board the trolley, I locate the token, plunk it in, and take a seat towards the back. I breathe a sigh of relief and lean against the window. The trolley snakes down Chester and into the tunnel at 40th Street. At 30th Street Station, I exit en route for the regional rail line. Now in this city, the trolley doesn't let you off exactly at the train station, no,

it lets you off across the street—across the busy Market Street. So I run across this busy thoroughfare, dodging cars but managing to sink my shoes in puddles with sea-level depths and slushy snow piles black with crud.

Once inside the wonderfully warm train station, I make my way towards the R7 line. My destination: the Duke's house. He lives up in Chestnut Hill. And my car resides with him.

That's a rather long story. It involves bands travelling a significant chunk of miles for two shows, the worst snowstorm on the east coast in a long time, lack of proper snow plowing in this city, and my car drowning in mountains of the white stuff. Now I am returning to retrieve my trapped car and make my way to yet another show. Sounds easy. Yet I do not know the exact condition of the automobile. Is it ready to move? Will I need to shovel with the tiny military shovel I stored in the car after an unfortunate incident years ago wherein I found my car stuck in a snow bank and nothing but a skateboard to dig it out (it did not do the job—skateboards are meant for skating, not digging). Considering the brutal rain, I hope the latter scenario will not present itself.

I climb onto the platform for the R7 and look at the clock. I have ten minutes to spare, since it's delayed. A few random bystanders mill about. Two older dudes wait in the warmth of the stairwell enclosed and heated. Pigeons dive for crumbs and return to the security of the rafters. 30th Street Station shows its age. Old architecture and the city skyline out both sides of the huge openings for the trains. As I take all this in, I realize: I have no idea what stop to get off at. Chestnut Hill? That's the final stop. I distinctly remember the train arriving from at least one other stop when I took it home the previous weekend. I run through the memory banks. Fuck. I race down the steps and back into the station. I find a payphone (no, no cell phone) and dial the Duke. "Man, what stop are you?" I demand. "Wyndmoor." I have one minute until estimated train arrival. I sprint for the tracks. And on queue the train rolls to a stop.

Slumped into an orange-brown seat, I ooze into a sleepy mode of reflection. The scenery of old North Philly passes by. Strange blocks of buildings and factories, most abandoned and in disrepair, zoom by. Graffiti washes over most of it. And all of these names I've never heard before. I thought I knew the city inside out; now I feel like an outsider, an interloper.

After the Mt. Airy stop, I get up and ready for departure at the next one. Rain still hammers away on the people, the trees, the buildings, the cars, everything passing by. I hope it isn't as bad as it looks. Soon we stop. I exit past weary train employees. When I descend down the steps, it's quite apparent the rain has not abated. It thunders through me. The umbrella is pointless. I reach the Duke's house, and am glad I remembered to bring a spare pair of kicks.

After an hour of chilling, we ready ourselves for the journey. It goes like this: drive to Freehold, meet Rese and then head to New York. The rain poses a problem. But we are troopers after all, professionals, stoics. I rev my car up, and it sounds glorious. I gun it in reverse, and despite some hesitation with a small snow mound, she climbs over and frees herself from winter bondage.

Driving is treacherous. The rain beats harder and harder per minute. I try to follow the Duke, but fellow drivers on the roadway weave in and out of the traffic. Once outside of the city, I breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy the Minor Threat blasting from the portable CD player. As we cruise past Trenton and continue along Rt. 195, I notice something peculiar about the windshield. Something looks strange, out of place. Then I pinpoint the trouble: the wipers have stopped working. I flip the switch, thinking that perhaps they automatically stopped for some gremlin-related reason. When this fails to produce the desired effect, I begin to panic. The raindrops smash against the windshield, growing into tiny amorphous masses of wet blobs. I accelerate and notice that the drops sprint in long trails towards the roof. I can see, I can see! The Duke is in front of me, the red taillights providing my only guide. Yet I'm unnerved. I mean, how often do wipers fail? What are the chances? Why me???

Now most would've done the smart thing here and pulled over. Driving in rain—in torrential, monsoon like downpours—sans windshield wipers isn't something safe or intelligent. Yet I threw caution and smarts to the wind and proceeded as if the skies were blue. Sometimes you need to be resourceful, make due with what you have. Now some may opine that resourcefulness need not involve grave danger. But the way I see it, sometimes one must play the hand that fate has dealt them.

Somehow we reached Rese's place unscathed. Speeding at maximum velocities down major highways with no wipers was not the worst thing I've ever attempted. Yet navigating the slower back routes was an entirely different matter. Were it not for bright Coke colored red taillights I would not have made it. Luck was on my side.

So after a couple more hours of travelling (not in my car) we arrive at hallowed ABC NO RIO in New York City. The rain slows. We find a place to park a block away. And all seems well. We see the throng of kids in front of the joint, chatting, smoking, eyeing the new kids to arrive. Inside we find our comrades and tons upon tons of more kids. I've never seen the place so stuffed to the walls. I run into a friend from Britain. I meet another from Long Island. I try to talk but a tickle clenches my throat. The cold I inherited the previous weekend refuses to release its grip. The eyes bleed rivers of tears and I am a coughing, apologizing mess. The poor kid must've thought I was blowing him off or crazy. I pop a cough drop but it does little to ease the fits of coughing and crying. Soon though, I regain some semblance of normalcy.

Bands play. Bands rock out. Everyone seems in good spirits. Somewhere in there my band performs and it's a grand time.

Then the Man shows up.

Now I can't say I've been to every show at ABC. Yet in the times I've been there, never before have I seen the presence of the NYPD. Immediately I think of that old KRS-ONE song: "Woop Woop/That's the sound of the police. Woop Woop/That's the sound of the beast." Two big slabs of beef march inside. One of the promoters of the show tries to talk sense with the long arms of the law. They do not listen. The show is effectively shut down. Outside, I watch

as the cops lead a victim cuffed into their cruiser. I recognize him as the kid that I spoke with earlier. "That dude was smoking pot out back. He got arrested," I hear someone say. Soon many are griping about the one kid and how he got the DIY landmark shutdown (for musical performances). I know he was not the only one out back—the infamous backyard.

As far as I know, ABC NO RIO is still not having shows. This is a serious blow to DIY bands and for punk/underground shows in New York City. And all of it thanks to Great White. Since they burned down the club in Rhode Island the night before, cops in all cities began a crackdown on all clubs and venues. ABC was one victim. The cops cited the lack of a Maximum Occupancy sign and the overcrowding inside the space, as well as the lack of a fire exit.

Moral of the story: respect DIY spaces. Down with pigs. Smash the state. And please, do not set off pyrotechnics in tiny venues.

AND MORE RAIN...

It's a rainy night here in the city of brotherly love as I type, it being March 26, 2003. I turned 27 six days ago. And as the rains fall on the city, the bombs rain down upon Baghdad and Basra.

By the time you read this, most or all HaC columnists will have addressed the issue. The "war" could also very well be a memory, a brutal reminder of what the U.S. truly stands for. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that some in the business sector of the land of the free craved this "war." They worked hard to ensure profit at the expense of bloodshed, with dollar signs blinding them all the way. The blind lead the blinder when the prospect of war looms on the horizon. I mean c'mon—there's riches to be made. Look at it like this: killing people costs money. Blowing shit up costs more. When said people are dead, someone needs to clean that up. When said shit is blown up, someone needs to rebuild. Since this is a grab for land and power in the genuinely colonial/empire sense, we need to recognize the vast natural resources to be devoured, packaged and sold. Beyond that, there's the PR campaign, the propaganda, to convince the conquered and the clerics in the land of the conqueror, that the conquering is justified and just. Let's face it, an empire cannot rule by iron fist alone.

All of this is the rather extravagant and hyperbolic way of stating: several companies stand to reap major bucks of the devastation of Iraq. These companies seek to lend a helping hand. That comes with a heavy price tag. Indeed, construction companies, defense contractors and of course our friends in the oil industry fly in circles above the dead and dying, waiting to pounce.

It begs the big question, the question of 2003: Why is the U.S. government so hot for Iraq?

Considering who reads this 'zine, I'll dispense with the obvious sugar-coated lies spoon fed to the media and sold to the masses: democracy, freedom, liberation. I mean seriously folks, the sheep and the shepherds who swallow this tomfoolery and really believe it either live with no contact with the outside world besides Bill O'Reilly and CNN. Oil, yes, oil is important. But it goes beyond that.

What do Bechtel, the Fluor

Corporation, the Louis Berger Group and Kellogg Brown and Root all have in common? Each one stands to reap millions of dollars from the U.S. government. Why, you ask? To reconstruct Iraq. Although this may be settled by press date, currently five companies vie for the \$900 million contract that will enable the winner exclusive rights to provide a variety of services. Essentially, the lucky corporation will go in and clean up whatever messes the U.S. and allied military leaves behind. Considering the recent bombardment of Baghdad and other regions, the clean up crew faces a multitude of tasks. These include repairing health services, ports, airports, schools and other infrastructure.

Farhad Manjoo asserts in a Salon article, "Whether you think Iraq will be 'conquered' or 'liberated' by American forces, regime change in the country will open up vast new opportunities for commercial interests to do business there, and the Bush administration could have wide latitude in determining which of those interests win out." It goes without saying that the companies coziest with the Bush team will win. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initially invited a select few engineering businesses to bid on the \$900 million contract.

Take for instance Kellogg Brown and Root. Its parent company is Halliburton. And we all know who was the proud former CEO of Halliburton: Dick Cheney. KBR also created the Pentagon's fire fighting plan in Iraq, part of LOGCAP—the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program. That's a ten-year contract between the Pentagon and KBR, wherein KBR gets somewhere in the neighborhood of \$830 million to provide infrastructure services. U.S. foreign policy experts determined that the price tag on rebuilding Iraq to be approximately \$20 billion a year for many years. Thus, the more skeptical among us may conjecture that some of these corporations have a vested interest in war. The more cynical may argue that they actively lobbied for war.

And we must also consider the defense contractors. The MIC (Military Industrial Complex). It thrives and is alive and well. I work with a lot of different people. That happens when you work for minimum wage at a corporate-owned bookstore chain. No one I work with supports this war. One astute co-worker suggested, "This is all for the defense contractors. The government is spending billions for all these weapons. They and the makers want to see all of this product in action. They don't want to see them jaws sitting in some warehouse gathering dust." And when you ponder the fact that the U.S. drops more bombs and launches more firepower on Iraq right now than in any other military conflict in history, one comes to understand the viewpoint of those like my co-worker.

Last fall the Pentagon signed the largest defense contract in the history of the U.S.: Approximately \$250 billion went to Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. They beat out the sole competitor, Boeing. The contract stipulates the creation of 6,000 Joint Strike Fighter combat planes for use in the U.S. and 3,000 fighter planes to be used by various arms of the military. Other planes will be manufactured to be sold to foreign nations. The contract is expected to create

nearly 40 year's worth of work.

What is interesting about this contract is the revolving door between the government and the defense industry. Air Force Secretary James G. Roche (who signed the contract) served as CEO of Northrop Grumman for 17 years. Northrop Grumman gave generously to the Republican Party and Bush. This is in addition to charges of fraud against the defense contractor.

And then there's Lockheed Martin. Geoffrey Gray explains in the *Village Voice*, "Navy secretary Gordon England served as president of Lockheed's Fort Worth division, which built the fighter planes. Bush's secretary of transportation, Norman Mineta, ditched his term as a congressional representative to join the Lockheed Martin team back in 1995. The undersecretary of the Air Force, Albert E. Smith, was a Lockheed Martin vice president... And Vice President Dick Cheney's wife, Lynne, served on the Lockheed board of directors from 1994 to 2001."

He adds, "Bruce Jackson, a current Lockheed vice president, served as financial chair and fundraiser for Bush's presidential campaign. At a 1999 conference, Jackson bragged that he would personally 'write the Republican platform' on defense if the Texas governor made it into the Oval Office."

This is not to downplay the importance of oil in the Bush administration's push for war. It's pretty obvious to all but the most nationalistic among us that the U.S. government thirsts for the black gold of Iraq. And why not? According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), Iraq may harbor the potential for 332 billion barrels of oil. Billions more could remain undiscovered in Iraq's western desert. This makes Iraq second only to Saudi Arabia in most oil reserves. Yet all of this is conjecture. What is not is the fact that U.S. energy policy is based on the rabid consumption of oil.

Michael Renner states in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, "The President and Vice President have assembled a government peopled heavily with representatives from the oil culture they came from." This includes former Enron vice president Thomas White, now Secretary of the Army, and Don Evans, former head honcho of oil exploration company Tom Brown. He's now Secretary of Commerce.

Then there are the major oil companies ready to pounce on Iraq. This includes ExxonMobil and Chevron-Texaco of the U.S., Royal Dutch-Shell and BP of Britain and the Netherlands, as well as TotalFinaElf of France. In 2001, the companies boasted only 44 billion barrels of oil in reserves. Iraq is the obvious Great Black Hope for these companies. And though the Bush team denies oil as a reason for invading Iraq, major players in the oil industry say otherwise. Phillip Ellis, chief of global oil and gas operations for Boston Consulting, when asked whether oil factored into the war, replied, "Of course it is. No doubt." Other reports indicate that oil corporation executives have been meeting with U.S.-supported opposition leaders in Iraq.

A law professor summed up the situation thus: "The most sophisticated firms that come in first, and establish good will with the locals obviously will reap huge benefits down the road." He concludes, "These are going to become

brand names in Iraq. That's huge."

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ravilution

Since I'm lacking two issues worth of talking shit about a thin crisp wafer or biscuit, usually made of unsweetened dough (dictionary definition of *cracker*) I'll make up for it in this issue.

I. Impeach the madman

Those with internet access go to this website: www.votetoimpeach.org.

The only explanation I can give to make any sense of the President's way of thinking is by using his very own words of "There's evil in this world." And that evil who is Bush can also be summed up with a quote from my friend Bijal*: "What the hell is going thru his little cokehead? Oil, that's what."

II. Affirmative Action for whites

"Far more whites have entered the gates of the 10 most elite institutions through 'alumni preference' than the combined numbers of all the Blacks and Chicanos entering through affirmative action." —*S.F. Examiner*, April 1995

"We must understand the cynicism that exists in the Black community. The kind of cynicism that is created when, for example, some in our party miss no opportunity to roundly and loudly condemn affirmative action that helped few thousand Black kids get an education, but you hardly heard a whimper from them over affirmative action for lobbyists who load our federal tax codes with preferences for special interests." —Colin Powell at the 2000 Republican National Convention

One of many stops during Bush's 2000 campaign for the Presidency was Bob Jones University, an ill-famed school which refused to allow the entry of Black students up until 1971. Soon after admitting Blacks measures were taken in 1975 to make sure that such people didn't intermingle with whites. The school set a ban on interracial dating, citing a Biblical story which talks of God creating barriers between different peoples. During his campaign Bush didn't blink an eye or lodge any sort of moral protest against Bob Jones University. But he sure did speak passionately a few weeks after Senator Trent Lott's resignation over Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan.

To me, George Bush is symbolic of America and business as usual. Here we have a completely unintelligent and unqualified white guy who made bad grades both in high school and in college yet is somehow in a high leadership position with the support of a significant number of people white and non-white. For whatever reason these people deliberately overlook his stupidity and lack of competency. His career title "leader of the free world" requires knowledge of the international community and global affairs; yet he makes blatantly ignorant statements like "Africa is a nation that suffers from great disease"

and "unrest in the Middle East causes unrest throughout the region." He got into Yale not because of his intelligence (because he's obviously lacking that), but because 30% of admissions in Ivy League schools are reserved specifically for children of alumni, *regardless of academic achievement*. Why is it opponents of Affirmative Action never seem to criticize the discriminatory policy of legacy admissions? And no surprise that historically alumni at these schools have been majority white males, so it would then make sense that the incoming 30% will also be majority white. Bush also experimented with cocaine in his past yet avoided going to jail (and moral judgment from white America). Yet another fine example of Affirmative Action for whites: even though the majority of drug users in America are white and Blacks make up a mere 13% of drug users, somehow Blacks are 74% of the people imprisoned for possession of drugs. Bush is also a staunch supporter of the War on Drugs as are many white parents—so long as white kids who are caught are filling up rehab clinics and not jail cells. And here is the most important aspect of Bush that resembles the structure of America: the guy goes on vacation every other week and does very little work. Who's doing his work for him? An administration full of both men and women of color who have had to prove their intelligence (Condoleezza Rice went to Stanford and Colin Powell went to West Point) by working twice as hard as their fellow whites, who have had to struggle to get to the top instead of having power handed over to them on a silver platter, and who are in that cabinet specifically **because of Affirmative Action**. Yet even though it's people of color who are doing all the work behind the scenes, the under-worked, unqualified, and unintelligent white guy is praised by his supporters as exhibiting great leadership. Not to mention many people deliberately overlook the fact that maybe the idiot shouldn't be in charge.

You can see this pattern reflected in American businesses. In the agriculture industry the majority of labor is done by Latino workers who are sweating 10 hours a day in 100 degree southwest weather. Yet almost all of these companies are owned and managed by white guys. In the information, technology, medical, and science industries a large number of the employees are Asians with PhD's and Master Degrees. Again, most hospitals and computer companies are run and managed by less educated and less experienced white guys. In the sports industry where the majority of the athletes are black virtually all teams and merchandising companies are run and owned by white guys. You look at the garment business, most of the workers are immigrant women of color, and again who runs and manages these companies? White people.

Don't get me wrong. There are plenty of qualified and hard working whites deserving of their jobs and college admissions. But if America's businesses and its education system show us anything it's that time and time again, unqualified white males are being promoted and accepted over qualified, educated, hard working people of color and white women.

Which brings me to these two questions: does Bush, a man who's received hand-

outs his whole life and is on vacation half the year while getting paid a high salary have the right to talk about discrimination? Do whites like to "play the race card" to ensure access to opportunities? Here are some facts showing that they do:

—The Glass Ceiling Commission, headed by Republican Elizabeth Dole, reported in 1995 that even though many minority (particularly Asian) workers had higher levels of education and better work credentials than their white counterparts, lesser qualified white males were still being promoted over them. 97% of the senior managers of the Fortune 1000 Industrial and Fortune 500 companies are white, and 95%+ are male while 57% of the work force are people of color, women, or both. Of the 5% of managers that are women, 5% of that are women of color! When polled at the workplace the majority of white workers stated that they'd rather answer to a white male boss (even if he's got the vocabulary of a 4 year old like George Bush??) over a person of color

—In the state of Washington blacks only make up 3.8% of the college student population. This means that for every 100 students (who are majority white in Washington) only 4 students are black. White residents felt so threatened by this ridiculously tiny 3.8 PERCENT that they passed a state ballot initiative to get rid of Affirmative Action from state universities and colleges. I wonder who white parents scapegoat now when their kids don't get into college?

—Even though Canadians make up the 4th largest illegal immigrant population in the U.S., Irish are the 1st largest illegal population in New England, and Italians are the 2nd largest illegal population in NYC, over 95% of people stopped and/or imprisoned by the INS are people of color, with the majority of Border Patrol activity occurring at the U.S.-Mexico border. According to the www.ins.gov, Mexicans only make up 30% of undocumented aliens in the U.S., yet are targeted the most by law enforcement. The *New York Times* reported that of 37 work raids conducted by the INS use of Spanish by workers was criteria for investigating people believed to be illegal

—According to a 1997 USDA report several southeastern states took 3 times as long to grant loans to black farmers as it did to white farmers. In 1992 94% of the committees that granted loans had no minority or females employed

—A study by the Leadership Council on Civil Rights reported that black youth who've committed a violent crime are 9 times more likely to be sent to prison than white youth who've committed the exact same crime

—The Department of Justice reports that white college students are the overwhelming majority of drug users and underage drinkers in the USA. Yet black motorists in NJ are 9 times more likely to be pulled over by cops and have their cars searched for drugs. A *Boston Globe* investigation found that in Massachusetts Blacks are twice as likely as whites to have their cars searched when stopped by the police. In St. Louis, IL Latinos are 1% of the population yet 40% more likely to be pulled over by cops than whites

—Even though suburban whites consume the most resources and produce the majority of waste in America (and in the world) a

United Church of Christ report found that 3 out of 5 of the largest commercial landfills garbage dumps are in black and Latino neighborhoods. 60% of black & Latino and 50% of Asian American & Native American neighborhoods have uncontrolled toxic sites

—The University of Chicago and MIT studies showed that resumes with Black-sounding names were 50% more likely to be passed up than resumes with white sounding names (ironically I saw this same news story reported the same day Bush came out against Affirmative Action)

—The Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington reported that Blacks are twice as likely to be denied mortgages as whites who are making the same income and have the same qualifications**

—According to an Equal Pay Day study, women earn 89¢ for every \$1 earned by a man, even when women are working the same job and have the same experience

—Blacks earn 80% of whites with the same education level

The President of the University of Michigan (who's a white male) has come out in support of Affirmative Action. You would think that he would be against such a policy if his school is being overrun by stupid, unintelligent minorities, right? But this isn't the case. What's also not mentioned about the three whites who have sued U of M is that white students who had lower GPAs and aptitude test scores were admitted into the school over them also. So where's the lawsuit for that? Sometimes it seems like some whites have no problem looking the other way when it comes to the stupidity of other whites (as in the case of President Bush) but get easily infuriated over the presence of imaginary "unqualified" people of color.

It's worth noting that when I (or anyone else) write about the existence of institutional bigotry we have to present as many facts as possible just to prove our damn point to all the skeptical whites. But when whites talk about being denied jobs or not getting admitted into a school because of "reverse" discrimination we're just supposed to automatically take their word for it even though they have no facts to back up their claims***. Why is it we never see Labor studies conducted on how large numbers of whites are unemployed because immigrants have "stolen" their jobs? Why is it rich whites aren't funding research to publish statistics on the large number of whites across America denied education because of Affirmative Action? Why is it through the media we don't ever hear of the wide spread impact that institutional "reverse" discrimination has on white America? Why aren't American businesses and corporations coming out against Affirmative Action by showing that all these incompetent minorities and women are bringing them down and making them lose profits? Why isn't the US military, one of the largest proponents of Affirmative Action in America speaking out against such a policy? Where is the proof that universities are admitting brainless people of color into their schools who are dumbing down the quality of education at such institutions?

If there was proof of such discrimination going on we'd see studies conducted and analytical reports issued by both government and private organizations trying to

expose the suffering of whites. Instead we listen to a lot of empty rhetoric on "reverse" discrimination (which is offensive because it implies that it's natural to discriminate against women and people of color). There are clearly more whites in this country with most of America's wealth concentrated in this population. Surely they can finance and produce such a study to back up their claims of this supposed rampant unfairness they are encountering. But they don't and they can't. Why? Because there simply is no proof.

III. Action Alerts

The easiest way to make an impact is to simply write a letter. Not everyone can be an activist or participate in a protest but writing an email or sending a postcard takes no time at all to do. These actions have proven to have lasting effects such as:

A. 67,000 faxes sent from TrueMajority.com which helped cause Senators to filibuster the nomination of anti-Civil Rights judge Miguel Estrada

B. The Fund for Animals (action.fund.org) letter writing campaign helped pressure the Governor of NY to ban a dangerous poison used to kill birds

C. 10,000 people signed an online petition at SikhNet.com demanding that video game corporation Eidos pull off the original version of Hit Man 2, which portrayed Sikhs and Dalits as terrorists. The website also placed pressure on stores to remove the game from their shelves

I'd like some feedback on the action alerts, does anyone find these useful or am I wasting my time listing them?

Take action!:

—To find your Congressional Representative or Senator: www.house.gov, www.senate.gov

—Listing of e-mail address of every nation's leaders: www.parish-without-borders

—Office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights: www.unhchr.ch/html/hchr/contact.htm

1. Tell the President not to resume nuclear testing or use nukes first in an attack—the U.S. already has a large enough stockpile of nuclear weapons and does not need to waste any more money testing brand new bombs. While you're at it you might as well add in some other complaints when writing him: President George Bush/The White House/Washington, DC 20500; president@whitehouse.gov, vice.president@whitehouse.gov; phone (202) 456-1111, fax (202) 456-2461

2. Meet the new Trent Lott—more Congressional honkies reveal their inner-cracker! Close to the anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 House Rep. Howard Coble publicly stated on a radio show that President Roosevelt did the right thing by interning 120,000 Japanese Americans. History shows that never once was a Japanese American convicted of espionage or arrested for inflicting damage upon the American government, and that every person arrested for treason and sabotage during World War Two were white (surprised? I'm not). The highest decorated American soldiers during WW II was the Japanese American regiment. Demand a public apology plus resignation from the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security. You can either take action by writing House Speaker Dennis Hastert asking him to pull Coble from his position at the website theretheygoagain.com or

you can contact the clown personally at: Rep. Coble/2468 Rayburn House Office Building/Washington, DC 20515-3306; Phone: (202) 225-3065; Fax: (202) 225-8611; e-mail: howard.coble@mail.house.gov. Side note: people say we don't need Affirmative Action because bigotry no longer exists anymore among those who hold power therefore discrimination cannot be exercised. Well here's a white man in power who advocates violating the Constitution and putting a certain ethnic group in internment camps. Let's also not forget Senator Trent Lott's voting record on disenfranchising blacks the last 20 years, Senator Slade Gorton's voting record to damage Native American economic dependence, post 9/11 comments made by Senator John Cooksey who said that people who wore "diapers" on their head should be racially profiled, Senator Alfonse D'Amato who mocked Judge Ito (American-born and raised) by talking with a fake Japanese accent during the OJ Simpson trial, the Texaco executives who were recorded on tape making slurs... there are plenty more examples but I don't think I really need to go on

3. Oil funds terrorism, so demand more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly cars: www.cleancarcampaign.org/alerts.shtml

4. Global Exchange send internet faxes advocating global human rights issues www.globalexchange.org/getInvolved/actions.html

5. Ask that the U.S. government provide soy, rice, almond, and other forms of non-dairy milk in school cafeterias for those students who are lactose intolerant or don't consume milk for personal reasons: Peter Murano, Associate Deputy Administrator/Special Nutrition Program/USDA Food and Nutrition Service/3101 Park Center Drive, Room 628/Alexandria, VA 22302; fax: (703) 305-2782 (sorry no e-mail address!)

6. Join the Action Network, a large coalition of environmental groups that utilize internet activism and emailing: actionnetwork.org

7. Wage Peace, anti-war website: www.wage-peace.org/actions/alerts.php

8. Support reproductive advocacy: www.ppaction.org/ppaction

Write me! Ravi Grover/PO Box 802103/Chicago, IL 60680-2103; sanyasi@juno.com

—Read this (or send me a stamp or two and I'll mail you printed copies)

1. "Breaking The Cycle of White Dependence": www.raceandhistory.com/historicalviews/timwise3.htm

2. "Honky wanna cracker? A look at the myth of reverse racism": <http://www.zmag.org/Sustainers/content/2002-06/24wise.cfm>

*: This same girl who is half my weight once kicked me out of bed in the middle of the night. Fucking jerk.

***: A cop-out commonly stated by whites is that discrimination only occurs based on class/income level and not on ethnicity. The facts listed prove otherwise.

****: Same applies to those who are privileged within the scene and preach on stage or write in 'zines about how they're being conspired against by mainstream forces or are exploited by capitalism. While these people are never forced into playing the role of the educator, never forced to dialogue with or confront "the mainstream,"

or even required to present any actual proof, we're just supposed to automatically believe them when they say they're being victimized.

—"I come from a tropical people, I can't handle this cold weather" Travel Story #1: Thanksgiving weekend of last year in New York City I hopped on the 6 train from southside Bronx to upper east side Manhattan. When I stepped out I called my friend on my cell phone and told them to meet at the corner of Lexington and 53rd. While waiting around an older black grandfather type struck up conversation with me. He started off by telling me how he was smoking an illegal Cuban cigar, then told me about how he worked in a bar owned by Al Capone near State Street & Jackson in Chicago when he was a teenager that was shot up by mobsters (a little Chicago history—I read in *The Wicked City* that Louis Armstrong played the clubs that used to inhabit this intersection). After asking me if I was Indian the following exchange ensued:

"Yeah, you know Gandhi once spoke in Harlem in the '20s..."

"Really?" (thinking: no he didn't)

"He had a caravan of cars that drove through there, and all these people came out to see him... they had these nicknames for him... like the King of Kings and the Lion of Judah."

"...I think you're talking about Haille Sellasie."

"Who?"

"Haille Sellasie."

"Who's that?"

"He was the Emperor of Ethiopia."

"Yeah, yeah, that's what I meant... now what did I say?"

"Gandhi."

"Oh okay... now Gandhi... now who's that?"

—Not a travel story but still worth telling: Several years ago at an outdoor party I got into a dis match with a white girl (while I won the battle that night I'm still fighting the 500+ year war against Whiteness). The conclusion: "Oh what do you know, Ravi, your people worship cows." "My people don't worship you."

Shittalking with OB

After several issues of dazzling political insight, it is now time to turn to a subject that I actually know something about, hardcore. Recent events within the pages of this fine fanzine have raised such doubts as to whether today's punks know a Crass record from a hole in the ground. Just what are today's kids thinking? Well luckily for these clueless neophytes, old man OB is going to set all y'all up with some working knowledge of our beloved hardcore scene. See, over the course of the hundreds of shows I have attended, put on, or roadied, not to mention the many hours and couple a thousands of dollars I have spent on records, has led me, not unlike other notably thinkers as Sherlock Holmes, Stephen Hawking, or Isaac Newton, to postulate some axioms about this genre. And for the benefit of the poor, uneducated masses reading this rag I will now kick the truth to the hardcore youth.

The Truth about Hardcore Shows and Records:

- *The optimal number of bands playing a hardcore show is three.* Unfortunately many hardcore promoters subscribe to the philosophy that more is better. Also far too many promoters try to be nice, letting bands "jump on" bills or refusing to say no to every local band that desperately wants to play with American Nightmare, or whatever the fuck they are now named. This has led me to waste years of my life sitting around between bands at shows. It also leads to crowds bludgeoned into stupefied zombies by a near endless repetition of poor playing openers, thereby diminishing the excitement when the headliner finally arrives on stage after midnight (or for the matinee, 8 o'clock).

- *Hardcore music should not be played between bands at hardcore shows.* While this seems axiomatic to anyone with half a brain, people insist on following up that brutal set by Nine Shocks Terror with some more thrashtastic sounds. Instead the sound person should set up the inherent harshness of hardcore by juxtaposing it with jazz, pop, or reggae. Also these genres tend to be quieter than punk rock, allowing for people the privilege of actually conversing with fellow punks.

- *The hardcore show will not start on time.* After 20 years, we still can't get this shit right. Add one to two hours to the time listed on the flyer and still see all 6 bands.

- *If the vocalist says move it up or pack it in, no one will budge.* This is because nine times out of ten the singer's band (a) sucks, (b) has never played in the area before, or (c) both. If the crowd wants to move up, or dance, they don't need the band's permission, so don't bother asking.

- *Anyone over 30 years old is allowed to stand to the side of the stage.* This is so they can see the band without fear that their brittle bones will be moshed or their grey hair will be stage dove upon. Okay, so I made this one up, but it damn well should be true.

- *The seven-inch is the correct recorded unit of hardcore music.* This is due to the inherent repetitiveness of the music as well as the limited musicianship and vocal ability of most hardcore bands. Think I'm wrong. I can name on two hands the amount of hardcore records (LPs) that stand up all the way through. However there are hundreds of punk LPs, that trimmed of their filler, fluff, and inane cover songs, would make excellent EPs. You know you are skipping tracks on that Snapcase jaw in order to reach your jams.

- *All things being otherwise equal, morons tend to make better music.* Think I'm wrong again? How many times have you said this: "They're really nice people, but I just can't get into their band." And how many guilty pleasures are in your record collection, those records by Shelter, Ignite, Judge, Earth Crisis, Saves the Day, Guns and Roses, Eminem, Integrity, Assrash... do I need to go on?

- *Records, like shows and the revolution, never come about on time.* In ads for labels, "out now" means 1 to 2 months, "out soon," 3-6 months, and "in the future" means never. Do not send money until you actually see the product. Which reminds me Frosty, I'm still waiting for that "What Holds Us Apart" seven inch I ordered.

- Finally, and most importantly, *I am right.* So

don't bother arguing.

There you have it, what took me years of attending shows in battered warehouses and smelly VFW halls, reading shitty fanzines, and suffering through third generation Antioch Arrow rip-offs to learn, all summed up in a mere few paragraphs. Please follow these rules (and don't give me no shit about how punk is all about breaking barriers and being true to yourself) and the scene will be better off for it.

Now, on to the music. Reports of Rainer Maria becoming good are greatly exaggerated. Upon hearing the track "Ears Ring" from the EP of the same name I thought they might have learned to rock and decided to give them a another chance by checking them out at the Church. Well they were as boring as ever with the exception of "Ears Ring" which, incidentally, I had to wait through the whole set to hear. Do you like Neil Young? Well, then you should check out Songs: Ohio who I saw on my Louisville vacation. This just in: Strike Anywhere are still great. They sort of mailed in their Philadelphia gig, but the Jersey show a couple of weeks later rocked. Supporting was Majority Rule, who, if they canned the thrash and stuck to the Fugazi like noise-to-driving sound formula, would be real good. I also dug their dualie tom attack that had me fondly recalling *Drumline*. Yaphet Kotto made their return to the East Coast with kick off show at the Church. Adding Jose on drums made the band that much better, but these dudes still couldn't match the Philly scenesters on the dance floor of Making Time later on that evening. Big ups to Boston's Suicide File as they make thinking person's hardcore and still go all out on stage, so much so that the bass player sometimes ends up playing the back of his axe! I saw them at LaSalle where, undaunted by the political apathy of the punks, the singer spoke out against the war. Punks that might be scared off by the band's label and/or teen idol looks, I here-by give you permission to like this band. Del Cielo was quite good at their Ladyfest Philadelphia show. Also check out their CD and split 7-inch with Kill The Man Who Questions for top notch indie rock. And just who did snatch up all those Kid Dynamite reunion gig tickets in under an hour? Shit was like Bruce Springsteen or something. Lates.

OB/PO Box 19602/Philadelphia, PA 19124; mtob708@hotmail.com Like my bitter and jaded smart ass commentary? How about ice hockey? Send for *Shittalker* fanzine at the above address for more of both.



So by the time you read this I will be in Hawaii. More on that later though.

This is the education issue, but my column is pretty much always about education. What I want to focus on is Affirmative Action. I am going to make the assumption that most *HeartattaCk* readers are pro-Affirmative Action and not bother going into the arguments as to why affirmative action is a good thing. If anyone really

wants to debate this they can e-mail me.

The Supreme Court recently (April 1, 2003) heard arguments on two Affirmative Action cases, both coming from the University of Michigan. One from the college and one from the law school. Two busloads of us went down to DC from here at Penn Law to rally in support of Michigan's affirmative action programs. What I want to do here is outline what the legal argument is in support of affirmative action and give my opinion on constitutional law in general.

The plaintiffs in the Michigan cases are both white women who claim that their Equal Protection rights under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution were violated by the Michigan Affirmative Action program. For those of you who don't know, the 14th Amendment states, "No State shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Basically the white women are claiming that they are being discriminated against because of their race in violation of the Constitution.

Before we even get started here, there is a question whether the Equal Protection Clause should even apply to the dominant majority race. I don't think it should, since it was written after the Civil War specifically to promote the equality of African-Americans and other minority races. But my view has been rejected by most courts, so courts will analyze a case like this one the same way it would if African-Americans are claiming discrimination.

There is a certain process that the court goes through when analyzing an Equal Protection claim. First, does the statute have a discriminatory purpose? Obviously, the purpose here is to help achieve equality, but since Affirmative Action laws give "preferences" to African-Americans there is a discriminatory purpose here.

Since there is a discriminatory purpose, the court must decide whether the discrimination is permissible. Obviously, I feel that it is, but the Court has a specific way it will deal with this question. For Equal Protection analyses the Court uses what are called "tiers of scrutiny." There are three of them: rational basis, intermediate and strict. (There are some things that fall in between levels and courts are not always consistent as to what each level means, but I'm not getting into that here.) As a general rule, if the law involves race the Court will give it strict scrutiny; if the law involves gender it gets intermediate scrutiny; and everything else gets rational basis review. (Another current controversy is what standard of review anti-gay laws should get, but I'll save that discussion for another time.)

So what does this all mean? Laws given strict scrutiny review are almost always struck down. In order for a law to pass this review the state must have a compelling interest and the means used to achieve this interest must be narrowly tailored. With intermediate review, the state interest must be important and the means closely related. For rational basis review, it is a legitimate interest with means that are rational related. Almost everything passes rational basis review. For example, one of the leading cases deals with a law that was passed that said one type of eye doctor was allowed to manufacture lenses for glasses while another type was not. Discrimination? Sure. But this is acceptable because the government has a legitimate interest

in regulating who manufactures eyewear (for safety reasons) and the means (restricting who can make them) are rational related.

Applying all this to the case at hand, Affirmative Action, if we are using strict scrutiny review, the backers of the Affirmative Action plan must come up with a compelling interest. In this case, there are two obvious answers: (1) making up for past discrimination or "setting things right;" and (2) a diverse student body. I haven't read the briefs in this case, but Michigan is probably not making the first argument. This is a very unpopular argument right now. White people don't like to feel that they have to give up any power in to make up for past discrimination. Michigan most likely only made the second argument. So is a diverse student body a compelling government interest? This is the question that the Court is answering in this case. I obviously feel that it is. The white people's lawyers actually made the argument that a diverse student body is not even a legitimate state interest. The second part of the analysis is not relevant in this case. If it is a compelling state interest, then the means of allowing more African-Americans to be admitted is obviously narrowly tailored.

So how do we decide if a diverse student body is a compelling government interest? Your guess is as good as mine. This is why constitutional law is bullshit. All that analysis and it comes down to whether a judge thinks it is compelling or not. Trust me; these judges already have their minds made up. They aren't going to be swayed by any argument either way. So this question will basically be decided based on whether the nine judges think Affirmative Action is a good idea or not. This is not a legal argument. You and I have an opinion on whether Affirmative Action is a good idea or not. Don't let anyone fool you into thinking that these judges go through a neutral analysis to come to an answer.

So 90 of us went down in two 45 person busses from Philly for the rally. On the way back one of the busses broke down, leaving our options as waiting four hours for another bus or piling into one. Nothing like a cramped ride back with 89 of your closest friends. I was comfy on the floor of the bus with people's knees and feet whacking me on the head and shoulders. It was still better than some of the days on tours I've been on. Not all law students took it quite that well.

The funniest part of the day at the rally was when we were marching from the Supreme Court to the Lincoln Memorial where some speakers were going to speak. There were about ten people with big signs on the side of the route. The signs were anti-circumcision signs. I'm not sure whether they had planned their rally on a day when they knew lots of people would be there or if they just happened to be there the same day. Either way it was odd to have these people there for an Affirmative Action rally.

I've been doing an externship this semester at the Women Against Abuse Legal Center. Since I have completed three semesters of law school I am allowed to argue cases. I haven't had one yet that has gone to trial (although I have one in two days that looks like it is going

to go), but I have had the chance to make a couple arguments in front of judges. There is one judge who is a tiny woman who is known for making attorneys cry their first time in front of her. So I knew what I was in store for. First off, she gave me and the attorney who was with me a lecture for not introducing me properly. Then it went smooth for a bit until the judge asked me where in the Protection From Abuse statute something was. I told her I wasn't sure exactly where it was and she proceeded to tell me not to come in her courtroom again unless I had the statute memorized. It was bizarre. I actually had to try not to laugh. Good thing I didn't. Other than that it went pretty smoothly and my client got what she wanted. We'll see how the trial goes.

So, Hawaii. I spent last summer working here in Philadelphia and figured it would be cool to go somewhere else for my second summer. I managed to score a job for myself on Kauai at Legal Aid Services of Hawaii. I've never been before, so it should be great. Legal Aid does a wide variety of legal work for the poor. From my understanding there are serious housing issues in Hawaii. Real estate prices are really high there and there is not much room to expand because they are small islands. So I will get to work on some housing cases. Domestic relations work is necessary everywhere so I will get to do some domestic violence and family law work as well. They also do public assistance cases. So, there you go. If anyone wants to come visit for a week or two, let me know. Who knows where the hell I'll be living, but sleeping under my desk or on the beach will be fine with me. I'll let you know how it goes.

So the best post 9/11 punk record I've heard is Sage Francis' Makeshift Patriot EP. It has some of the most cutting political commentary and anger I've heard in awhile. Looks like from the cover art that he has a few Born Against LPs at home as well. The thing is, this is a hip-hop record and not a punk record. Yet it is more punk than anything else I have heard lately. Where is the punk outrage over how the media has handled 9/11? Am I missing all the great political punk out there? Someone fill me in. Punk should be on the cutting edge of this. Now with the war in Iraq going on, I expect punk bands to be railing against this war at every chance. I think punk has lost some its political edge. Bands seem to be just content to be arty and not "preach." Fuck that. I want bands that have an opinion.

You can e-mail me, as always at storguso@law.upenn.edu. Aloha.



Grounding Power: An Interview with Ninder Nindy Kaur Nann

Ninder Nindy Kaur Nann is fiercely dedicated to equality in her personal life, in her community based organizing and through her

work in Ottawa, Ontario, as the National Representative on Youth Issues for the Canadian Labour Congress, the national umbrella group of unions in Canada.

Since August 1998, Nrinder has worked in the education and campaigns department of the CLC, developing and delivering innovative youth-focused educational programming and campaigns for young workers, with an emphasis on popular education.

Nrinder is also active with a number of activist collectives that work on the local impacts of globalization and challenge movement-wide systems of oppression. During demonstrations and resistance actions, Nrinder has been known to whip out pompoms for some radical cheerleading or play with chalk, paints and crayons to creatively express her resistance.

Nrinder finds herself empowered by ancestral spirit and is actively searching for balance in work, health, healing and love. I first met her through Colours of Resistance, a loose network of organizers of color and anti-racist white activists working to further anti-racist/anti-oppression politics in the global justice movement. Her innovative approaches as an anti-authoritarian working in the labour movement connecting anti-oppression politics to working class-based and youth of colour-focused organizing has long been a source of inspiration to me and many others.

CC: What does organizing mean to you?

NNKN: Organizing, for me, is definitely not grouping people enraged with the system and status quo into neatly structured groups. It is more about people coming together to make change happen—folks dedicated to the work, struggle and resistance involved in collective liberation, but also committed to a creative, loving and supportive process which fosters equal and active participation in actualizing the change.

Organizing is people getting over their personal shit and learning to deal with life among others. Organizing brings folks together in the spirit of resistance rooted in equality and solidarity. Organizing is a tool and method for resistance and making change happen.

CC: What were some of your influences to becoming an organizer with radical politics?

NNKN: I grew up in a small, predominantly working class, rodeo-loving, country music-listening, community of 8,000 residents in the interior of British Columbia. A daughter of two hard working immigrants and sister to two older brothers, supported by a posse of extended family and a community of Sikhs and immigrant families from the Punjab region of India.

There were three dominant ethnic groups: first nations, white and Indo-Canadian. There was plenty of racial tension. The rich, mainly white, folk lived on the "upper lands" and the working class communities lived in and around sawmills (lumber mills). I think at one time it was even called a "tinderbox of racism" on national radio when a series of high school group fights broke out among young men of colour and white guys. Typical stuff, you know, young men of colour demanding their place and having to defend their rights physically in a community that wanted to maintain a particular power and privilege base accessible to select

people on its terms.

Growing up with often violent explosions of racism, power struggles and people rising up against it, organizing was more than just a political choice "to do the right thing"—it was a way of surviving, living life on my terms and choosing to enact my rights as a person born in Canada. In high school, we set up anti-racism groups, held teach-ins around racism, went to other cities to talk to students where similar shit was going down. That was my first crack at organizing.

Then came electoral politics—engaging on this level was pretty natural. Growing up, folks seemed pretty interested in elections. And in some ways, in a community like where I grew up, electoral politics was about all you could do, even at the age of fifteen. My focus shifted from municipal politics to provincial because one of my uncle's was the first Indo-Canadian to run and win in the riding constituency. Plus I grew up, graduated high school, left town and broadened my scope.

By the time I moved to the larger, urban centre of Surrey, a suburban city on the edge of Vancouver, I was active in youth-based activism: at first, through the New Democratic Party youth wing, then campus-based stuff, then rooted in my community around women's issues and fighting off neo-nazis who threatened the safety of elders from my community and finally as a young worker around corporate greed and capitalism.

Like most people, my organizing priorities shifted and grew with my awareness and understanding of oppression, its systemic nature and how to make change happen.

CC: As the National Representative on Youth Issues for the Canadian Labour Congress, you do political education with young people on economic inequality and building working class resistance. In working with young people you've also talked about developing youth leadership and increasing their capacity to fight back. As an anti-authoritarian what does leadership mean to you, and how do you incorporate leadership development into your work?

NNKN: I don't like the term "leader" because of the whole power thang. Who deems who a leader?

I think what happens well among activists committed to anti-oppression is encouragement, development and sharing of skills, tools and roles which folks are empowered to harness, use and change. An example in the paid work I do is Solidarity WORKS!, a three-week paid, hands-on activist skill development session for young workers run through the Canadian Labour Congress with our provincial and local counterparts. Designed by and for youth, it brings together non-unionized and unionized youth to learn from each other's experiences and develop each other's skills through popular education. After a week of intensive learning sessions, folks go into unions and community organizations to put into practice newly learned organizing strategies.

At the beginning of the program, we go through an activity where participants reflect on the strengths they have or draw on within themselves to deal with daily struggle. Positive, self-affirming qualities emerge like, "I'm a great listener," "I'm creative," "I enjoy working with other like-minded folks," "I'm fiercely committed

to equality," "I'm approachable," "I like to take action," etc. The group list is saved and unveiled later in the program.

Later in the week, after dismantling the systemic nature of oppression in society and in progressive movements, folks take some time to critique "leadership" and establish their own guidelines of effective, equality-based organizing. Another activity at this stage has participants list off what they feel a good organizer/leader should be. After running the program seven times, we've found participants list, without realizing, the same traits, qualities they see in themselves.

We do a cross comparison, and it is amazing the self-realization that goes on. What happens is more than just patting each other the back and saying, "yeah, we can all do this." But folks go through an intensive group and individual experience of reflection, analysis and critique not only of what goes down in the structures of mainstream movements—who is "seen" on the frontline in summit-hops and what we define as "radical"—but also journey inward and critique their own behaviour, become aware of their own privileges and redefine what equality means to them and how they can be active in creating it. And all this goes on while engaging in organizing both in unions and in the community through the two-week, hands-on placements.

They reach personal epiphanies of understanding their own power and control in order to challenge, resist and change the current economic and societal structure and systems. In Regina, Saskatchewan, this summer, participants had such a growth experience that they formed their own affinity group called Young Workers Organized Resisting (K)apitalism (Y-WORK). Now, they pop around town once a month engaging in creative direct action exposing employers with shitty employment practices.

CC: Can you say more about leadership?

NNKN: A real leader doesn't keep lessons learned to themselves. They wanna share it and hook up with others who are there or challenge the process of epiphany in the spirit of collective action and liberation. A real leader is able to facilitate change in other people in terms of their own personal-political journey and skill development.

Leadership is not about complacency and the masses looking to be led. Instead, everybody is a leader—an agent of change—sharing skills, resources, ideas, thoughts, critiques, analysis, lived experiences in order to collectively change shit. And this work must be based in honesty, respect and the spirit of true solidarity and equality.

I think at one time, folks defined leaders as people with lots of self-confidence able to rile a crowd to take to the streets—the lone wolf. These days, I think an ever-growing pack of folks are stepping up to make change happen. They choose not to define themselves as leaders and actively fight off the title. More people are willing to acknowledge the supportive community around them which ultimately builds, shapes, grows and sustains them and the actions they chose to initiate or engage in.

I think effective, honest capacity building and people-based leadership is exactly what anti-authoritarian resistance is all about: empowerment to enact change for yourself and others, to defy the system of privilege and power

to instead create organic growth among people and communities to fulfill their own, collective needs. So, real leadership is based in sharing power, being honest and having an openness to critique, growth and change within while at the same time, learning skills and sharing insights, lessons and other things to empower others to engage in making change happen beside you.

CC: How have you learned about respectful leadership?

NNKN: You know, the more time I spend reflecting on my father's life the clearer it becomes how much I learned about life, organizing and effective community involvement from him. He used to really take time to listen. And when asked, he would offer his thoughts and perspectives on situations. He was active in the Gurdwara (where Sikhs communally practice their religion; hold community forums; share langar, a communal meal shared after spiritual ceremonies and readings; etc.), speaking to issues facing the community equipped with his interpretation and understanding of the political messages in the *Adi Granth Sahibji* (Sikh "holy text" which is a compilation of teachings written by the 10 gurus of Sikhi and regarded as the final "guru"). He would actively share lessons and engage where needed. He would offer time to friends, family and community members for reflection and survive the daily struggle. Sometimes, that would take the form of every other weekend spent among friends in the bush fishing or hunting—but mainly spending time in nature to touch base and facilitate growth. Which raises another important point: effective organizers and "leaders" take time to rest and nourish themselves and others.

CC: What do you think about U.S. pop culture images of Canadian society?

NNKN: Have you seen *Bowling for Columbine*? I think Michael Moore hams up Canada a bit too much in the film, making up here appear like a people's utopia.

If you really wanna get into what is up with the perceived image of Canadian society, we'll have to devote a few articles to that. Ya better believe we aren't far off from the way things are going in the States. Don't have to dive too deep into progressive accounts of Canadian history in order to learn that. Heck, just review our policies since 9-11 and the increases to our military budget vs. our acclaimed (and quickly eroding) healthcare system, education system, environmental standards, labour standards, etc.

As for "Canada's left"—it's pretty diverse, at least the "left" I'm active with. Most people I see pushing for a better way of life in Canada are young, of colour, women, Aboriginal, of the First Nations, immigrant, descendants from "homelands," from urban centres and rural communities and often working their asses off to survive.

CC: Why is leadership development important to building mass based, multiracial, anti-racist, feminist, queer and trans liberationist, multigenerational, anti-capitalist movements working for collective liberation?

NNKN: When a person decides to take action, learn more about a topic or develops a desire to change the status quo, an unjust situation, or anything else, they are on a journey of taking ownership of making change happen. This may well be the only form of ownership that really

matters. It is rooted in empowerment rather than power. And most often, a person doesn't do this alone. We hook up with others to get things done. I believe radical liberation rooted in equality and anti-oppression leads us through personal liberation and has direct impact on how the collective liberation happens. This means we embark on a journey of critical self-work and implant ourselves into the society of organization and resistance. This contributes to the make up, operation and culture of the resistance and creation. As we participate in clusters, communities, gatherings and crews, we share this individual and group process. We experience education, ignorance, respect, love and solidarity. We learn how things can be and how the rest of it ought to be.

Collective action and collective leadership based in this will build mass based anti-capitalist movements rooted in multiracial, anti-racist, feminist, queer and trans liberationist, multigenerational, and anti-ableist reality. Yup, we've all got a whole lot of work still to do.

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As part of my daily commute, between the Belmont Red Line stop and Evanston, I take the Purple Line express. Running only during rush hour, the train cruises nonstop between the Loop to the suburbs, trapping its passengers for an oppressive twenty minutes. It is here where I gather most of my El stories. I can go on forever with amusing stories that involve screaming schizophrenics, the mentally handicapped rocking pants soiler (the "the" means that he's a reoccurring character in my life), a train car full of violently drunken frat boys, and a chubby Michael Bolton lookalike belting Pearl Jam's "Evenflow" from between cars before leaping to near death in a daring stunt of stupidity. I've seen fist fights & copulation, Cubs & Sox fans, and every bodily fluid imaginable to nature run up and down the CTA's aisles. It could be cabin fever or it could be Chicago's soul-annihilating winters that force these passengers to completely lose their marbles. I pass the time by lulling in perfectly timed power naps.

This afternoon, on my way home from

work, an older man entered the train at the Davis stop. Much like the contemporary Sean Connery, he was handsomely grey, gruff with confidence, and carried a sense of beaming wisdom. Once the car set in motion, he lurched into a lecture. The man was a professor of some sort and most likely taught at the school I worked for. As the first words exited his mouth, the seats around him cleared. Beyond my headphones, I heard partial snippets of ranting on the Siberian space program, "goddam ungrateful kids today," and the "physics of education." It was a commanding voice, demanding the attention of his captive audience. In the physics part, he mentions "anti-matter" and I found myself thinking, "Whatever happened to Norm Arenas?" I turned up the volume on my portable aural output device (Sony calls it a "Discman"), thinking, if I wanted to hear madmen ramble on, I'd rather listen to Old Dirty Bastard.

When we came to the Howard stop, it was everyone's last chance to escape the raving Russian. Our car had an outpour of passengers, warning those on the platform of the basketcase behind the closing doors. If nothing, the man had cleared the car faster than a vegan fart. I, among a handful of others, stayed put. Some cowered in fear, too terrified to move, but kept eye contact with one inanimate object ("reading"). A woman two seats up blew her nose and spent fifteen minutes examining her snot. Others, like me, enjoyed his presence. I turned down the volume to achieve manic stereo sound.

"I ache for deez kids. Deez kids out here, spending all dis money on books, spending it on school, on nothing! Dis pain has no cure. [He clenches his fist towards me, even though I'm not a student] No cure!" the Siberian physicist laments.

ODB uncannily replies, "This type of pain, you couldn't even kill with Midol / Fuck around, get sprayed with Lysol / In your face like a can of mace, baby"

To heavily generalize, it's pretty punk rock to be anti-academia. Not anti-education, because DIY supports self-improvement, but without the involvement of higher institutions. For suburban folks, college is such an ingrained notion, it's only natural to fuel that punk rock rebellion and claim, "No, I won't go to Yale." Hell, our classy Presidential leader is an alum, which makes it even less desirable.

Ask any punk rocker what they thought of high school. For the most part, they detested it. Meathead jocks who bullied anything nonconformist, an administrative authoritarian state, and that general air of being freakishly ostracized littered their lives and then drove them to listening to loud, raucous rock'n roll. They were Nicholas Cage in *Valley Girl*, the *Romeo & Juliet* style story of a new waver's romance with a prep. In fact, I was rather well-liked.

It was a good time to be around the Triangle area. Chapel Hill was still sitting on its laurels after being deemed the indie rock capital of the world. The Transmissions Fest would soon come, which would put the town on the map in terms of electronic music. Raleigh's alt-country scene was hugely prolific as the underground rave scene was, for better or for worse, opening up to more commercial appeal. Sadly, Raleigh's punk scene was a blip on the radar, fighting the heroin

bug that would eventually cause its demise. Durham finally rid itself of Christian Laettner, who started his laughable NBA career with the Minnesota Timberwolves. It's also worth mentioning the great things happening in Greensboro and Wilmington around this time. Rights Reserved kicked my ass up and down Dick St. enough times.

There were house shows abound and age was never an issue when going to independent clubs. Good bands stopped in town every weekend, exposing us to more music nerdism. With three college towns in such close proximity, it was simple to adopt the bohemian coffeehouse independent record store art film lifestyle when one was sixteen and had access to a car.

My high school was part of the public school magnet program ("Is it for kids who are magnetized?") Al Burian once joked to me years ago). The plan seemed to work as forced integration, bringing in "academically gifted" students from the suburbs/rural areas to attend a school that served as the base for inner city students from housing projects. It was a huge melting pot of cultures where diversity was genuinely celebrated. We had the county's highest SAT scores, yet also handled serious gang problems.

It seems like my high school was a series of such paradoxes. Our prom queen went on to Ivy League stardom, while the prom king sat in jail, awaiting trial for armed robbery. He held up the movie theater where he worked because, well, he didn't have enough money for prom. He might have gotten away had he'd been smart enough to wear a mask.

I was close pals with a guy named Brian, who was the captain of the soccer team. He did his homework *at least twice* a night—just to make sure it was perfect, introduced me to Antioch Arrow, and attended NASA's ultra-nerdy summer engineering camp, showing up with a homemade T-shirt that says "NASA: We fuck shit up!" In our Senior Year, for our school's annual lip-synching competition, we performed Cupid Car Club's "Vapor Rub Out" with other classmates. He was Spiv in his Varsity letter jacket. I was Steve Gamboa.

We had a teacher, Mr. Black, who drove a red Mazda Miata that said "SKAMUSIC" on the license plate. I always saw him around at shows, with lovers under each arm, beer and cigarette in respective hands, and warning me about tomorrow's pop quiz. I had him for "Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union," in which Mr. Black tossed out the war veteran written curriculum and instead schooled the class on Marxism, complete with a year end showing of *Red Dawn*.

The Latin teacher was a Superchunk fanatic, always striking up conversations with the newest Archers of Loaf rip-off bands. The psychology teacher was a registered Communist and my U.S. History teacher used two textbooks: John Garretty and Howard Zinn. My friend David later taught there, comfortably making references to Catharsis in class, and once commenting on a student's Spazz shirt, much to her excitement. How often does a high school English teacher casually have discussion on grindcore?

Atom and His Package once sung about his Punk Rock Academy dream, but this was pretty close to its reality. The school definitely

distorted any idea of what society is supposed to be like because when fall rolled around, the cultureshock was tremendous.

Siberian Physics Prince: "It's dis Goddam Music Revolution! They can brainwash easily. There is no smart people anymore."

Old Dirty Bastard: "Let's sing a song / C'mon party people / all in together now, singalong / Have you ever ever ever / in your long legged life / had a bald headed bitch for your bald headed wife?"

Like every other punk rock kid in the mid-90s, I did a 'zine. They were mailed to bigger 'zines for review, handed out at fests, and traded with various penpals, some of whom I still keep in touch with to this day. Hopefully none of you ever saw this atrocity. It was a paper 'zine (you know, *pre-LiveJournal*), printed on scammed Kinko's cards, and bound by the hope that someone could relate to my petty high school angst. I hate my parents! My favorite band is Jawbreaker! Punk Rock makes me an individual, but I sure would like an Avail patch on my backpack, too!

Ideal Solution? folded after four issues, simply because when high school was over, there came a whole new set of questions, which was followed by a new wave of teenhood angst. The writing staff (my lunchtable friends) were pursuing other goals, advertisers didn't want to commit to space that might never show, and Victory Records sent me that Baby Gopal record to review.

The last issue came out in spring of 1997. It had an Education theme and consisted with interviews with Deadguy, The Monorchid, and Hellbender, with the aforementioned Al Burian—all of them talking about school.

Coincidentally, as I'm typing this sentence into my fancypants laptop, Burian is at the next table over, penning his column into a notebook with *The New York Times* laid out in front of him. We're sharing stumped glances over the shoulder of my friend Kerry. She's trying to distract herself from Spanish homework.

I kind of wish head honcho McClard had consulted with me before stealing MY theme to use it for his own *HeartattaCk*. I'm not mad or anything, and I'd offer my grand ideas for free, especially since my pay raise from last issue.

The idea for the last issue spawned from the imminent graduation in the spring. I wasn't quite sure I wanted high school to end, mainly because I was clueless as to what was happening next. It could have been fear, it could have been apathy. Who knows? With college applications burning a hole on my desk, the albatross dug deeper.

The anti-authoritarian part of me kicked in. Why go to college? I had no idea what I wanted to do and no career goals. I mean, who *has* goals, anyway? It would be a rebellious act. I would be taking life into my own hands and turning it against The Man! Fuck you, you institutionalized, status quo breeding, intellectual manifest destiny whores! Carpe Diem, motherfuckers!

Despite waving an angry fist in the air, I was still at a loss. Like some deluded punks, I didn't have answers. I mean, critical thinking for me meant *Maximum Rock 'n' roll* record reviews. College was still an alien concept—a serious

commitment that costs a lot of money for a measly certificate of validation. So what did I do? I asked people in bands I liked. The absurdity of this still bowls me over. What made their answers more qualified than Professor X? Hell if I know. It's kind of sickening, isn't it?

All of the subjects interviewed in the last issue of *Ideal Solution?* ended up talking about college. More likely it was an age thing, but once they touched on the subject, my curiosity carried the rest of the interview. One didn't finish school and expressed slight regret as he was trying to enroll again, but his parents' financial status prevented him from getting financial aid, even though he hadn't talked to them in five years. Another already had a degree, but one that he felt was irrelevant because he chose a path because he *had* to choose one. Instead, he returned to school to become a physician's assistant. Another cruised through a highly regarded liberal arts school, but his world was broken wide open when he realized that he wasn't the only smart one around, which set off a contest of who could be more unique.

There was never the "college is for suckers" sentiment. No moltov cocktails were thrown in the direction of an imaginary dean. Well, at least, not yet. When grades were discussed, no one aped Homer Simpson by yelling "Nerrrrrrrrrr!" In fact, the subjects seemed to be really into higher education, if not scrambling to get it done. Parental pressures weren't apparent and I couldn't find any taste of reluctance in their words.

If anything, working on the issue humanized the concept, making it easier to swallow. Like Bill Murray's character in *What About Bob?*, I'm a baby stepper. Such big leaps are meddled with ridiculous hesitation and doubt. I realized that my opposition towards college stemmed more from a personal fear of progressive change rather than any real grounded argument. I thought I had everything figured out at the age of 18, but I was too scared to admit that I didn't. In fact—unbeknownst to me at the time—I had hardly scraped the surface.

Siberia: "No one lives by instinct anymore! Everything is calculated, that's what they teach you in deez classes!"

Brooklyn Zoo: "If you wanna step to my motherfuckin' wreck / Ch-ch-plow! Plow! Plow! Blown to death / You got shot cause you knock knock knock / 'Who's there?' Another motherfuckin' hardrock / Slackin' on your back cause raw's what you lack / You wanna react? Bring it on back"

College only evoked fear because it was setting a four-year plan. Four years?! So much can happen in four years! What did I do in my first four years as a living, breathing human being? My skull solidified from its post-birth mush into the misshapen peanut it is today, I learned to speak Cantonese (English didn't come until after those four years, which left me with a traumatic Kindergarten experience), I learned about mobile efficiency by travelling on two appendages instead of four, and I developed an identity-based confusion between my Dad and Mister Rogers (they're easily interchangeable; despite the biological discrepancy). To be able to predict where I was going to be in the new 2K millennium

was a daunting task. And it still is, seeing how I fucked up my taxes by not paying my estimated tax last year, or that I still scramble to make evening plans at 7pm.

So got over myself and filled out the paperwork. I prefabricated plans of intent and wrote them down after a major period of self-reflection. Besides all the bullshit work that went into it, it wasn't too hard—just arduous. I got accepted into everywhere I applied, took the cheapest option, and packed my bags.

I spent the next four years becoming the biggest graphic design nerd I could be, a lot of times applying it to the music netherworld I inhabited—since it was the 'zine that inspired my decision. I made life-long friends, insulted department heads (an act that might haunt me in my professional career), and, most importantly, took control of my resources and made the best out of my education. When opportunities came up, I took them. When I got knocked down, I rolled with the punches. I didn't really plan anything while in school, I just soaked up what I could in my incubator.

A few days after college graduation, I was attending a birthday party in Greensboro, NC. The birthday boy, Brian, pulled me aside from the festivities to catch up. I told him I had just graduated and he congratulated me—which I sort of wasn't expecting, given his stage antics are filled with strong anti-establishment sentiment. He asked me how I felt about it.

"I feel like I'm rolling down a steep hill towards a cliff in a shopping cart and there's no way to stop it," I admitted, because I really had no idea what was going to happen. Brian grinned in acknowledgement, "It's kind of a beautiful place to be, isn't it?" I balked at his suggestion, since my fear was genuine, but so was his. He said his post-graduation experience was similar. The same pressures from four years before were there—what's next? There was always the path of opting out, but that's so easy—especially if you have no qualms with disappointment. "As long as you do what you want to do, then you'll be fine," Brian concluded. Simple and cliché, I'll admit, but I really needed it at the time.

At least one thing I've realized while in college is that you can't stop life from happening. I didn't learn that from a professor, but in the fact that I just had to make a choice and commit to it. All you can really do is buckle yourself in and (a) take action or (b) let it take you. Whatever happens is a learning experience, or at least it *should* be. If you're not learning now, then you're not really living.

At the Belmont stop, I transferred to the Red Line, leaving the Siberian Physics Instructor to continue his "What Life is All About" lecture with a new batch of disciples. I was amongst the yuppie commuting contingent waiting for the next train. Aesthetically, I couldn't separate myself from the crowd, but I still felt unorthodox. I wasn't forcing alienation, per se, but choosing alterity.

On a similar topic, I did an interview with Mimi Nguyen (*Slander* 'zine, *Race Riot* compilation 'zines, *Punk Planet* columnist, *Maximum rock'n'roll* contributor) that focused more on mixing punk and academia in the newest

issue of *MediaReader* (www.mediareader.org). The issue (#6) can be ordered through Stickfigure Distribution. PO Box 55462/Atlanta, GA 30308. www.stickfiguredistro.com.

Since the conversations with my Dad were such a big hit in the last issue, here's another one, straight from 10th grade:

Me: "Dad, can you give me a ride to a show tonight?"

Dad: "What goes on at these 'shows' you're always going to?"

Me: "We just watch bands play. You wanna come?"

Dad: "OK, sure. What kind of music is it?"

Me: "Tonight it's these two bands, Suppression and Esso Asso. It's called power violence."

Dad: "Power violence? Hmm. I don't think I'd like that. Why don't you try and get a ride with your friend Jeff?"

School me. vincent@pacihi.com

Frank Sapelfeldt



This is the first time in my history of writing columns that I chose to interject my views on some social topics.

I am by no means trying to say my way is the right way. I am just putting my thoughts out for anyone who would like to discuss them. I know I open myself up for some colorful comments, but it goes with the territory. I hope anyone who

reads my column can understand at least where I am coming from, even if they completely disagree. Thank you...

"So afraid of what they'd see underneath the fantasy, so afraid to actually scratch the surface" —Sick Of It All

A fitting way to start the year for most people would be surrounded by friends and family enjoying yourself, and maybe getting a New Year's kiss. Well in case you didn't know it already, my New Years never start off that way. Last year I spent my first few minutes of the New Year pinned down by gunfire at 301 Sutter Avenue. This year started off pretty much the same.

It is commonplace in the East New York/Brownsville sections of Brooklyn to fire your gun off at midnight marking the start of the New Year. The problem is just that—people just start shooting. It can be one of the most frightening things in your life to hear and see. Watching people pour out of buildings, popping off shots. This year has been a particularly bad year for gun crimes so New York City has a program that they call "impact." Basically it puts a lot of cops out on the streets to deter crime. Now if you put tons of cops out on the street and then people start shooting all over the place you start to cook up a recipe for disaster, and that's exactly what happened. I can tell you that at the stroke of midnight the Ball came down in Times Square and bullets started flying in East New York/

Brownsville. But from where I was I could hear an automatic gun going off—sounded like a damn machine gun. I listen to the NYPD radio and hear that an officer had shot a male firing a machine gun. My partner and I rush over to see what is going on and find a male shot twice laying on a pile of shell casings of bullets he had been shooting off. As we work to save this kid the family and friends of the patient start to riot and pretty much throw my partner and I about 4 feet away from the dying kid. They drag the patient a few feet before police in riot gear have to move in so we can get to the patient. By the time we make it back to the patient he is going down quickly... I watch him as he takes 2 gasps and stops breathing. We scooped him up and run with him. We are using a mask with a bag attached to it that we can pump and effectively breath for him as he slips into cardiac arrest. We have paramedic back up waiting for us in our ambulance. We get the kid in the ambulance and try to get moving. But the family and friends of the victim have now blocked the street. It takes a good 3 minutes to move them out... all the while their brother, friend, cousin or whatever he is to them is for all purposes dead and we are trying our best to bring him back. To make a long story short—the kid died.

What had happened was he came out of the project building firing a small machine gun... 2 cops told him to drop his weapon. He did not drop his weapon, he turned it and fired towards one of the cops, the police returning fire with 2 shots both hitting him, one in the chest and one in the flank. Just another innocent victim was what people started to say the next day. Mind you that this innocent victim was in possession of an illegal firearm and was just recently released from prison for attempted murder. He was firing an illegal firearm and then fired on police officers. Forgive me for sounding biased in this situation, but how was he innocent? Did he deserve to die? Well, no one deserves to die. But what I am coming to terms with while working is that I have to go home at the end of the day. Like when I get called to a house and I am attacked by someone... I have and will fight back to the death if I have to. I don't want to sound like I am wholeheartedly taking the police side on things. But where I work I see so much violence and abuse toward the police, that sometimes I almost understand how they feel, think, and fear the notion of one of these people killing them. The area is gang infested; almost everyone you encounter has a gun or weapon of some variety. This is something that you just have to work around.

New Year's Eve into Day is also the best time of year to carry out acts of retribution—a "hit" if you will. At the stroke of midnight when everyone is out shooting off their guns and the cops are running around like crazy, this is your best time to try to kill someone and get far away from it. The shooting does not stop for some hours so you have a huge window of time to carry out your act. This brings me to yet another call this New Year. Another black male enters a club/bar where people are partying. He sees a few guys that he had some problems with. He goes back to his house and gets his gun returning to the club to call out the guys. People start to filter out of the club in a huge brawl. Cops arrive to break up the fight while questioning the guys who were called

out by the gun-toting-male; the male opens fire killing two of the guys he set out to shoot and wounding four others. Police return fire striking the gun-toting-male twice, one shot being fatal to the head. I know that police shot no less than four kids on New Year's eve. I don't know the circumstance of all of them I just know the two calls that I was on. I was also involved in multiple other shootings and stabbings that night. It felt as if we were just a meat wagon carting off bodies.

Too many young people are involved in violent crimes on New Year's Eve. I do my best every year to brace myself for this day but it always hits like a whirlwind. You strap on your bulletproof vest, make sure your knife is sharp and close at hand. You make sure your partner and yourself are ready for just about anything. Some guys carry mace; some carry other weapons. I don't really carry much anymore. The way I figure is that if the person has a gun what the hell is mace going to do? I wear my vest and I do carry two knives with me just in case it comes down to him or me. I am going to do whatever it takes to make it home at the end of my shift.

Now these are just a few examples of what goes on and what we deal with. I really do my best to play devils advocate in these situations. But over and over again I see no other options. What would I do if someone opened up with a gun on me? I am going to take him out if I can. I know in this day and age that is not a politically correct notion. But really ask yourself what would you do? I could go on and on about the lovely crimes that go on but its like a waste of energy. The fact of the matter is that on New Year's Day all the activists were out in force protesting the police. I watched the news and asked myself, "Do these people even know what is going on outside their doors?" Do they not hear the guns tearing up the night? Why do I, an EMT, have to wear a bulletproof vest? Why am I being assaulted and shot at? I understand the need for people to speak out. I understand people's feelings about the police. I get it!!! But why is it always, "He was a good boy... and they killed him"? He wasn't a good boy; your good boy was shooting a tech-9 machine gun at cops. He was just out of jail for attempted murder and look; he tried to do it again. I am a good kid and your kid is just a monster supported by my tax dollars. That's the facts, kids. If you live and work in New York City, your taxes are paying for these little monsters. Public assisted, housed and cared for on your backs and your dollars. Where are the values taught to these kids? Where was this kid's family his entire life? They always seem to be there when he is killed but never there to right him when he was wrong growing up. I blame the families of these kids for their deaths. My family busted their asses to instill a good work ethic in me. My family taught me to question my world. My family taught me to respect my community and my family name. I have pride in who and what I am and where I came from. The problems these kids had were far bigger than yours and mine. Broken homes, broken values set up for them by those who raised them. I just know that when the cards I got dealt weren't so good, I played my hand until I made them better. I didn't have to lie, cheat and kill to get something better out of life. I just had to work harder. I never got any handouts... Even when I needed them the

most.

"Why don't you open your eyes so you can see? Open your ears so you can hear. Take a look around and you will find out why."—Sick Of It All

Where was Al Sharpton when 2 black cops were murdered?

Al Sharpton is just another bloated big mouth riding the coat tails of Martin Luther King Jr. I think it is easy to say that I pretty much despise this man and his pimped-out hair cut. People seem to forget his early days parading Tawana Brawly around to the media. Destroying Steven Pagonas' career as well as stirring up racial lines in 1987. For those of you who don't know, Miss Brawly had claimed that she was kidnapped, gang raped and covered in feces with racial slurs written all over her body. This all turned out to be a huge pack of lies. But Sharpton was everywhere you looked crying, "outrage." Then we have the Korean grocery boycott where he called for the boycott of Korean grocery stores throughout NYC, causing many assaults on hard working Korean grocery owners.

How about "the Rockaway Five"? Yet another rape case that good ole' AL jumped all over. Yet again, it was proven to be lies. He was there for the Crown Heights riots blaming the Jewish community for the death of a black child hit by a car. The riots led to the death of Yankel Rosebaum stabbed to death by black teenagers. He is on every news program that he can find whenever there is violence against the black community. Putting himself out on the line to be a racial agitator.

But where were you Al Sharpton when two young black detectives were murdered? Two young hard working black police officers putting their lives on the line to get guns off the streets. Each shot to the back of the head and dumped in the middle of a deserted street. Two wonderful examples of young black men working hard, doing the right thing, and raising families—murdered in cold blood. Where was AL? No protest, no rallies, no community outreach. Where were you AL? What can you offer to the families of Detectives James Nemorin and Rodney Andrews besides your silence? All the soap in the soapboxes you stand on can never wash the blood and lies from your hands. I am beside myself at the lack of attention this murder received from community leaders. Al Sharpton—the one with the biggest mouth—sits dead silent on the matter. Good luck with your presidential bid, just what we need another asshole in office.

"I can't quite describe the feeling that puts a lump in my throat, butterflies in my stomach and tears in my eyes"—Yaphet Kotto

03-13-03: After a few mishaps I finally got to hang out with my friends in Yaphet Kotto. Casey and I met over a record trading board and struck up a friendship. He sent me a demo recording and a 7" of his band, Yaphet Kotto. The songs that I found myself listening to floored me. Soon after, we planned to play shows during their tour. My band, Murdock, could not wait to play with this band that we could not stop listening too. So the day came—5 stupid guys from NYC meeting up with 4 strangers from CA. We hit it off and we had a blast down the East Coast. Yaphet Kotto crashed at my house for a few days. My house is not very punk at all, but my family

was down with having them at our home. My family is awesome and supportive but they don't really get exposed to new and different things from outside our family. I was a bit nervous about the whole thing. Mag wanted to sleep on my couch and I didn't really know how my father would react when he found a strange black man sleeping on his couch. I woke up the next morning and found my father and Mag cooking breakfast together. My father was so happy to have someone to watch the news with in the morning. My mom made Casey blush a little bit when she called him handsome but she didn't like all the tattoos. To sit and watch my father joke and enjoy himself with someone from outside his world was wonderful for me. To this day my dad will ask about his "buddy Mag."

Yaphet Kotto had an effect on my family. My father had never hung out with anyone of color before much less someone who is queer. For the first time in my life, I saw my dad exposed to it and he was blind to it. He just didn't care. He enjoyed Mag's company so much it just didn't matter. I can't say how much those days meant to me, and how much as a band, Yaphet Kotto means to me. I told Mag that in the end they would always know that they had an effect on at least one kid and his family. I think some bands need to know that.

Well today I got to hang out with them and watch the play. I am so excited to see them play with Jose on drums. I got to talk with Jose about education and teaching before he played... what a great guy. Jose and my girlfriend Morgan talked about teaching for a while longer. Morgan is in school and planning on teaching as a career. Casey and I talked about bands, records and the tour. Mag and I talked about the things being said at the show. We kept hearing this one kid talk about how hard he moshes. He would mash his fist into his other hand and tell a young girl that he was with how bad he "fucked up this kid in the pit." I couldn't help but laugh; I told Mag that I see this kid all over the place and it's all he talks about. I see him away from shows at this place people go to get sandwiches and there he is talking about his moshing prowess. I find it comical and just never say anything to him because I feel like it will be a waste of energy. In the kid's defense other people have told me that he is a really nice kid and truly genuine. I don't know? He always manages to make me roll my eyes and laugh.

The show overall was pretty cool. Stop It!! from Virginia totally blew me away. What a great new band and four really nice kids. There was a point in the show where Jose has asked another drummer from a local band if he could use his drums. The drummer outright said, "No, my drums are too expensive," but after learning that Jose was not just some start up kid but the drummer from Struggle, Swing Kids and Bread and Circuits he quickly offered up his drums. Jose with pride declined the offer. I am not going to bad mouth the band of the drummer in question. I know two people in the band are very good people and very sincere in what they do and say. But the guys in Yaphet Kotto, Morgan, and myself didn't really care for the drummer's attitude. When the band played they spoke about support for one another and being more open to new people and new ideas. Well, why not help Jose

out with a drum set and what if he was just a new kid that needed a hand up? I thought Mag did a nice job of addressing the things that the band said while Yaphet Kotto played.

I was so happy to see my friends play. When we toured with them every night I would have chills when they played. I can not really put into words how they make me feel. "I can't quite describe the feeling that puts a lump in my throat, butterflies in my stomach and tears in my eyes." They pretty much put together everything I love about hardcore. They are intense and passionate about what they play and just tear it up from beginning to end. We have been trying to get this Murdock/Yaphet Kotto split 7" out for ages and it never seems to see the light of day. Casey and I talk about it all the time and one day I hope it comes out. I guess it would be like as if all the pieces in the puzzle would finally be there. Casey and I joke about how our friendship started over a 7" and then it will become a 7". Casey and Frank = hardcore record nerds. Yaphet Kotto is just one of those bands that keep me believing in this lifestyle. You don't grow out of this—you grow with it and I am taking my friends along with me.

I love the University of Michigan Football Wolverines, but I think the admission board should be fed to a hungry pack of Wolverines.

I know I am stirring up a big pot of shit with this one, but I am against anything that gives anyone an upper hand based on ethnicity and or gender. By the time this column is printed the U.S. Supreme Court will have ruled on the affirmative action policies at the University of Michigan. I am firmly against Affirmative Action, and before bleeding heart liberals label me you must understand my stance and where it comes from. I don't believe in handouts. I do believe in setting goals for yourself and working hard to achieve your goals. I believe that the highest qualified person should get the positions regardless of ethnicity and or gender. I think that Affirmative Action is just a nice way to have racial quotas. I can't see how I would be able to respect someone that got where they were just because a quota had to be filled. In the University's defense I do see how people from different backgrounds may add to the diversity of the educational experience. The admissions board uses a series of points when selecting a prospective student. Students of race are automatically awarded more points just for being of different ethnicity. I support the students currently suing the University.

I understand that racism is very alive and well with in our country. But I just see this as feeding into it. It's not only the University of Michigan's admissions process. Currently as we speak I am wrestling with the same problems within my own job. I have wanted to become a Firefighter since the age of 4; it is my dream and I am busting my ass to make it through a very competitive testing process. It started out very subtle. The filing for the written portion of the test had a set deadline. The F.D.N.Y. test usually has the highest turn out rates of all city tests. People from all over the world apply for this exam, because it is common knowledge that NYC is the busiest, and hardest working fire fighting force in the world. But when the deadline was reached they did not have enough "minority" applicants

so they extended the filing. At the end of that deadline they still did not have enough "minority" applicants. They extended the filing yet again and then began a program that consisted of going into neighborhoods of the demographic they required and waved the filing fee for the test. So basically as long as you were a "minority" you no longer had to pay to take the test. Meanwhile this hard working poor white kid had to dish out \$35 for his promotional exam, and \$35 for the open competitive test. I paid \$70 to take the very same test twice, while others were given the test for free. "Open Competitive" means that it is open to everyone and it should be an even playing field and it was already playing against me. I live paycheck to paycheck I had to scrape up the money to afford the tests.

The test is harder then most city tests but you don't need to have any prior fire fighting knowledge to score 90-100%. Many people buy books to practice the test, or like me you can find a course that helps you study and prepare for the test. The course I took cost me \$400, it was set up by retired and current firefighters many of whom are higher up in rank and very proficient in taking fire department tests. I went every week and followed their tips to the letter. They told me to sit in one place for a minimum of 3 hours and read a book without stopping to ready myself for test taking. So I burned through books any time I could and I read everything I could get my hands on. I took practice tests and did exercises for memory. I then found out from a female that applied for the test that the fire department had been giving a free written test prep class to women and minorities only. They were notified by postcard, no white male was offered this course. Up until this point I had paid \$470 in preparations and applications, women and minorities had paid \$0. My female friend had told me that they still didn't have a good turn out for the FREE classes. If given the chance I would have signed up for free classes, but I wasn't given that option.

I scored a 97.647% on the written portion of the test. That equals 2 questions wrong, I am proud of my score but anything less then 100 is not good enough for me. With this written score I know I am sitting on top of the pack right now. But I am sitting with possibly 1000+ other people with the same score. I am now waiting to take the physical portion of the test. The physical portion of the test is what separates the best from the people that won't be able to do the job. The F.D.N.Y. physical test is the hardest firefighting physical in the world. You can research it; people have died taking this test. I go to the gym seven days a week before I go to work. I work with weights as well as cardio to build up my aerobic energy. I spend anywhere from 2-4 hours in the gym and then go to work for the night. I know how hard and how competitive this test is, so I bust my ass everyday with sweat and blood to reach my dream. I just signed up for a physical training course about two hour's drive from my house. This course runs you through the exact physical test and trains you to not only pass the physical test but to strive to do it in record time. The course cost me \$500. When you add in gas, tolls and the equipment you need to take the test I am looking at approximately \$700. So to reach my dream I will have paid out about \$1170. The city started yet another FREE training program

for women and minorities for the physical portion of the test. A program that gives them access to a gym as well as personal trainers to ready them for the test. When I tell you that I didn't have the money to take these courses I mean it. I had work extra to get the money up, I had to borrow some of the money from family and friends I had to pull my belt a little tighter to hopefully make my dream become my reality. So to date: Frank \$1170 vs. women and minorities \$0.

From where I am looking from this is just reverse racism and sexism to appease affirmative action and city council. Some could say, "Now you know what it feels like," but it doesn't change the fact that it is not right. I just happen to be a white kid so it kind of flies under the radar and I know nothing I do or say will change it. I called the F.D.N.Y. to question these practices and I was told that the city need's more minorities and women on the force. I agree with this 100% but I think the way they are going about it is just completely racist and sexist. The difference is when I eventually make it where I want to be I will know that I did it on my own. Once again I will be where I am because I deserve to be there and not because of my skin color. You know I think about a black fire lieutenant that spoke out about the hiring practices of the 80's. In the '80s the city tried a quota hiring system that failed. He would come to a firehouse and look at everyone and say, "I am here because I worked hard and not because of a quota." Think about how many times he had to say that and why on Earth he would feel the need? He did get the job because he deserved it but he knew that others had got there by simply being of color. So he felt he had something to prove each and every time he came to a new firehouse. I just see this as promoting racial lines. It should just simply be the best women or man for the job regardless of sex or ethnicity.

"Recall the memories of yesterdays and better ways... and know-the innocence is gone... move on-from this day in we'll never be the same... faster words-and faster kids. Faster songs-and faster ends the one thing that's stayed the same... I've lived through days. I've lived through nights. I had my loves and I had my fights... you gotta know-you have my heart" —American Nightmare.

I believe this is the first time in my column that I actually picked a side on a topic. I always tried to stay on the personal side of things. I don't know why I chose to actually write about current events and issues. These issues may not even be that relevant to those who read this, but they are very real to me. I see people writing about "this" and "that" so I figured "what the hell?" let me throw my beliefs out there. I can burn with them or fly out shining, either way it's what I feel.

Currently as I am writing, this country is at war. Again I think I am going to go the road less traveled and say that although I am not pro-war, one less dictator in the world isn't going to be missed. Saddam Hussein is far from the last ruthless dictator in the world but one that never tried to hide the horrible and brutal acts that he carried out. Now I can sit here from now until the end of time and hear the arguments that America commits all these crimes and yadda, yadda, yadda over and over again. I just hope

people can understand the freedoms and rights that we have and how we came to having them.

My mother's side of the family can be traced back to the Revolutionary War. General Joseph Warren fought in the war to create our country. Through every war we have been in my family has bled for our freedom. This is something that my family holds very dear. I can say that America's foreign policy needs to be changed. I am not blind to the world around me, but as I watch protests across the country and hear celebrities protesting I become sick of all the bleeding heart liberalism that is going on.

I can not in good conscience say I like to see men and women go off to die. I don't like war, who the hell does? But would I punch the person carrying the protest sign "We support our soldiers when they shoot their officers"? Fuck yeah I would have them choking their teeth. The Columbia University Professor that said, "I personally would like to see a million Mogadishu's"—better hope he never runs into me in the streets of New York. Whether you are pro or anti war to wish death on our young soldiers is just not acceptable. Call me a "Yankee Doodle Dandy" that's fine with me. I stand by our troops; I stand by my friends who are over there and fighting for the very rights that most Americans take for granted. Adam Patterson, former drummer of The Hope Conspiracy, is an Army Ranger and somewhere in Iraq. John Diiorio and John Schnell both with the Army 3rd infantry are currently in Baghdad. All three in there '20s putting their young lives on the line protecting your freedom to agree or disagree with this war. All three of these guys joined the Army because of September 11th. Adam was on tour with The Hope Conspiracy when the World Trade Center fell; he didn't know what to do and he found himself enlisting in the army before nightfall. Adam has a poster of all the names of my co-workers that were killed on September 11th, 2001, a day that too many Americans have come to forget. I want this to end quickly; I want my friends and family home safe. I don't want anymore people to die. So call me what you want, but you can never say that I didn't believe in my freedom... and every time I close my eyes I will never be able to forget September 11th.

"Day in Day out... I did it for love"—The Hope Conspiracy

I love this life and I plan to do what I can with it. You are only as old as you feel and Hardcore keeps me feeling like I am thirteen years old. Feel alive with high fives and stage dives. I am going to "stay young until I die."

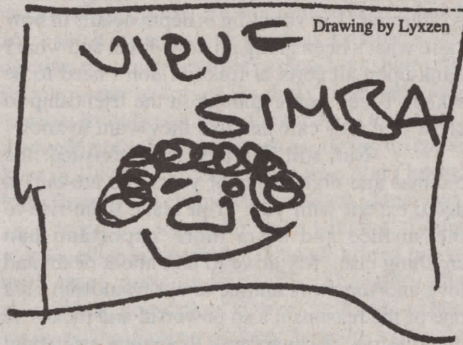
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"LOVE IS STRONGER THEN DEATH... FOR THOSE I LOVE I WILL SACRIFICE" 09-11-01 BOX 55-8087 never forget our 343 brothers. We will not leave you behind.

"I'm not afraid to say I care."—Torches to Rome

I want to say how proud I am of my girlfriend Morgan. Morgan goes away to college working hard for her degree in Education. But along with her Child Psychology and Development projects she found the time to become very active in Take Back The Night. She has been organizing this year's rally at her school

for education on women's rights and violence against women. I don't think I will be able to support this year's event, because I will be at class training for my F.D.N.Y. test but I just wanted to take this little moment out to let her know that I am very proud of her and her hard work. I hope she knows how wonderful and strong she is.



Here we are again and it's better than before. I have a better understanding and knowledge of how you work and how we work together. It's easier now to be around you—I'm less scared and I'm more relaxed and I know that you are too. It's just different now in general. I gain strength and warmth from being around you. That's just how you're meant to make me feel. I've not felt like this in a long, long time. Nearly five years.

I know I'm good for the people that I love. But I often love those whom aren't good for me. I'm getting better at that and learning all the time to read the warning signals and adjust myself accordingly. With you this relationship has been good and bad for me at various points. Now it's changed. The balance is right now.

Nobody else on earth makes me feel like this. There's no-one else I'd rather be sitting on the sofa with. That's a wonderful feeling in itself. You're the one with whom I have the strongest connection and I feel more understood than in years, even though it's still relatively new. Despite telling you things that so many others already know. It's irrelevant that this history is even shared with so many. They may have seen me pass through these events that I now share with you, but in my brief synopses you understand more. You get it.

And, oh, how good it feels to be got. To start to tell you a story and know that it's worth the effort. That when I'm done, when I'm through, when I'm finished, and you haven't interrupted once... then you'll ask your pertinent, insightful questions and cause me to re-examine, justify, explain and validate myself in a way that's challenging and stimulating.

It's the listening that gets me. To tell things to someone that listens, digests, ponders and asks. Asks. Asks. For so long I was unable to talk without being asked. Without being asked the appropriate questions I wasn't able to talk about things for years and years. Seven years. And here I am not recognizing myself. Surprising myself. Volunteering things that I kept buried for such a long time. Wanting to share and not needing the appropriate questions. Needing to share the tales with him because it's the way that he looks at me that makes me know it's okay. My instincts that tell me that this time, above all others, it's the right thing to be doing.

I blame the death of my mother, and

the subsequent inadequacies of friends to be there for me, for my inability to speak of the most serious things without prompting. When you share the innermost feelings about the death of the most important person in your life with someone and then they act like you placed this huge burden upon them and they can't handle it and it destroys the friendship—it makes one wary. It makes one so scared to give someone information that is so huge that they might not be able to bear its weight. That the pain and sorrow of the feelings one shares are so immense that the person is terrified of them and the ramifications of that are that they are scared of me and what I might share with them.

It happened a year after Mum died when on the first anniversary I poured out the whole story in the pit of Ryan's neck, sitting on his lap on a cold Vancouver beach. January First 1996. That's the last time I let all the Mum shit out. It's hard to find strong people. I told the story to David once, but not all the way. I never told it to Kris. But he saw me through my Dad's death in a way that made up for that. He was a good friend to me during that time, as was Seth.

This, combined with the demise of friendships with the two most serious partners I've ever had, caused the problem. I've been in love many times and had many relationships. But until David and Kris I'd always had the friendship. Every other single person I've dated, since I was eighteen years old, is still my friend. Every other person that has once whispered that they are in love with me still loves me to this day. Every other person that I invested time, energy and love into during my adult life is still part of it. There is no-one else that I have ever told secrets to that I cannot talk to. No-one else that if I needed them or they needed me we wouldn't be there in a second.

When one tells all one can for years to someone and then they walk away—it's a completely different kind of loss than the loss of the partner itself. It's the loss of all the time, energy and investments of love I poured into that man. All the hours of conversation in the small hours of the night. All the weeks, months, years of telling stories and sharing information and insight and learning all there is to know of them, thrown away. Is it important now that I know how many sisters David's Mum has and what their names are? Of course not, but the information is stored and now worthless. I'm sure similarly of me for him. These are the things you learn about a person to make them feel known and understood. When it's lost it's incredibly sad.

This was a new experience for me. I was twenty-seven years old before I learnt to even experience [let alone comprehend] this loss. Four years of working through it have led me here... where I acknowledge my inability to share and volunteer information about myself for the first time. It's easy for me to fool people. I'm so open and communicate clearly and I never lie. But that doesn't mean I don't withhold information. It doesn't mean that I tell the whole story. And because I tell these open, clear, objective stories of events and troubles it seems as though I'm open and sharing. But have you never noticed that I don't talk so much about how I feel?

I told Jake the story of Mum's funeral whilst driving to Palm Springs one day. I don't

think I shed a tear. Talked of the drama and the events without talking of the pain. That's not right. Talks of "He said, she said" shouldn't happen in my world without "He felt, she felt." That can't be left out of the story just because it makes me vulnerable. But, lurking at the back of my mind always is whether they will be able to take the weight of the story were it told at full power? Or was it worth sharing with this person when they might just walk away? And the more they know about me the more it will hurt if they do.

It became this game of sharing snippets with different people—telling different friends small things that they wouldn't crumble under the weight of. I adopted the idea that if I spread the pounds of pressure around then all would be well. But it's eight years later and no-one knows anymore. There's not a single person on the planet that I've ever told how I feel about the four worst things that have happened to me. Different people know different things. But no-one knows it all. No-one has even been told the stories of all the events—feelings and meanings aside. That's really sad.

People have told me that I placed a burden upon them by telling them things that they found so hard to hear about. That made me not want to share at all. It made me so unable to share unless the person asked a million questions. I needed to hear "So how do you feel about the death of your father?" in order to believe that the person really wanted to hear about it. I needed to hear it always in order to speak of it. And if they didn't ask then I didn't tell. I couldn't trust my instincts that it was okay to talk about it. I'd been burnt too many times.

Then there's the people who ask questions and insist that they want to hear and that they can take the weight, so you test the waters and things leak out over time. But rarely can they take it and often I'm 'too intense' and they step away. But my life events are intense and the expression of them will therefore be in accordance with this. To expect anything else is ridiculous. This, accompanied with the regular bullshit of people being drawn to me by my intensity and then as soon as they get close to it they realize it's more than they can cope with. Same old bullshit.

So there I was with no-one knowing it all and no hope of that ever changing. And now here I am with you and I think that one day you'll know it all. That one day I'll lay in the dark and tell you how I felt when my mother died. That one day I'll tell you what happened to me and how I made it through. I'll talk in detail of my dad's suicide. And the years with David and Kris. Of the happiness and love and demise of the relationships. One day you'll know it all and you'll take the weight of it. You already know so much more than most.

I don't think it's too much to ask. If I coped with the reality then surely someone can cope with the stories. And yes I'll cry, and yes, that will be intense. But that will be an amazing thing to share together. And it will be a positive experience that will let you know me in a way that no-one else does. Properly.

But here I am not needing you to ask. Am I mended, am I better, have the scabs finally healed? Or was it good judgment and these were people whom shouldn't have been told? I'm

thinking that it was a combination of the two. I should have been more trusting with some and I withheld correctly with others. But it's getting better all of its own accord with not just you, but everyone... although you are the reason why.

The ability to sit across a table from a loved one and pour my heart out without prompting, specific questions or bullying to share is returning. I'm vomiting in depth details of how I am, what's been going on, how I feel and what I think upon all sorts of folks. I don't need to be asked. I feel secure enough in the friendship to know that they care and that they want to know.

But, still, the past isn't revisited; the traumas and nightmares of years ago are buried deep, except with you. You make them rise to the surface and seem more important than anything else. My drive to talk about death and love and sorrow is unique to our friendship. It's one of the reasons it's so powerful and means so much to me. I cannot talk to anyone else about this stuff, even if they begged me. They would crumble. You won't.

So, I bide my time, patient in the knowledge that our time will come when we have these conversations. When I'll share it all and you'll understand. When I'll reach deep inside myself and pull out a large handful of the black slimy sludge that resides at the bottom of my gut. I'll give you this ugly gift and you will treasure it. Of course it's not beautiful and the sharing will be a tearful time, but the sharing itself will be the gift.

And you'll take it and hold it in your hands and look at the sludge, full of grit and lumps and you'll cup it, moving it from hand to hand. Finally, you'll place one hand over it and I won't be able to see it for a moment. I don't know if when you lift your hand it'll just be gone, or there'll be some small orange stone in its place... but the sludge will be gone and that is what will matter.

Even if it doesn't happen for hours or weeks or months; I know that it will happen. That in itself is new. It's a comfort having the knowledge that at some point in time there is a place for it to all pour out to. That you will listen and understand and know and respond and my final stage of healing will be complete. Or even if you don't—that's it's possible to meet someone that will. That people exist in the world that are strong enough.

I talked it all through when it happened. I've been through bereavement counseling. At various points I've cried until there were no tears left. But not for years. I've not been held in the dark and allowed to cry until there were no tears left for at least three years. That's a long, long time. There's tears to come. And you need to catch them.

But it's not that I need, expect or want you to make it all better. There's nothing to make better. I'm fine and happy and strong and sane. I just want you to hear it all. I know the healing power of outpouring grief. I've experienced it before. But not for a long, long time. And it was always straight after the events, not months or years later. It would be so different now. It wouldn't be about pure emotion or just about the tears. It would be about the words along with them... the putting the tears and the fears into words and sentences and blurring them out

between sobs at four in the morning. I know that I need to do this. I've done it before, and I'll do it again, and this time I need to do it with you.

You are the one that understands these days. I don't have anyone else I could envisage being able to take this intensity and face it head on. I'm ferocious and I know it. That's the difference in me these days. I understand my powers and therefore use them and control them in such different ways. And you helped me know that. You helped me to that place. I'd never known it before. No-one has ever faced me the way you have.

In the meantime you know all this. You know I have so much inside that should come out. You know that you were the first one I'd opened up to without prodding in years. The person that I'd opened up to the most extensively immediately. That you are the first I've written to in so many years. That you've opened many doors. I write to other people now. And I talk to other people now. These are great changes. But the sludge... oh the sludge... it's there and needs to be dredged up and be rid of.

It just sits there... it's not festering or growing or smelling or anything. It's right way down deep and no-one would probably know of its existence without in depth knowledge of my soul or incredible insight. But you knew. From the very first day you knew.

I will tell you it all. I will tell you everything that you ever thought I could tell you and then more besides. I will cry and it will be intense and I will love you so much more for being that person. I've been looking for years for someone whom is strong enough to help. It might not happen for a while, but I'm even looking forward to it coming...

In the meantime I'll work through it alone when I can, and pass little slime balls to souls I meet along the way. But that night, my strong friend, when I'll lie facing you in a barely lit room in the wee hours of the morning and tell you about when I buried my mother.... I look forward to it immensely. And the story of burying my father? I've never told that one to anyone. It'll happen... it will.

You are an amazing, wonderful man. You are the one I choose to tell it all to. You will not let me down. If I say it enough it will be true.

Nate Wilson



Do Or Die!

This story has absolutely nothing to do with the educational theme of this issue. I wrote that column two issues ago. I wish Lisa, Leslie and Kent could keep up with me on these issues, but oh well...

This column has nothing to do with the hardcore scene either... this is just a short story, that I recently remembered due to some odd shit in my life that was occurring and triggered the thoughts. The story is not bullshit, it's fucking real...

A girl friend and I decided to go to this old abandoned hotel called the Wellington. A few kids and other punks from Albany would venture there to drink, party, and hang out. We would go out of boredom, and because it was something I hadn't done very much. I think this particular girl liked the fact that I was so new to something as simple as this. I think I had only been in the building once before this, and it was also with her. At any rate we would go there to investigate, look around, and hang out on the top story overlooking all of the downtown streets of Albany, NY. We were a little weirded out, as she would usually always go with groups of people, and like I said I was really kind of new to going there.

The place was huge and scary. It's still standing there on State Street today. It's one of the tallest old buildings in the downtown area. So one day we decided to visit, mind you this was in the middle of the day, a sunny day. On this day we decided to venture into the basement where she had been once before, but it was a part of the building that I had never even seen or knew existed. Supposedly it connected to another building across the street that was also abandoned. The basement was completely dark, as there were no windows at all down there because it's under street level. Water was dripping all over the floors from some of the pipes above, and from the walls.

The place looked a mess and sent chills up and down my spine just being in there. The only light we had at this point was from a flashlight that I had brought. Garbage and kitchen supplies lay cluttered everywhere, the place was a complete mess. We decided to start looking around a little, trying to find this underground exit to the other building. As we searched we discovered doors that were old closets, etc. We decided to start looking in the closets, and we were opening doors everywhere, to see what we could find. We came to one particular door that opened to a closet. When we opened the door there was this huge jar on the shelf (the only item on the dusty old shelf). At first glance I thought it was wine or something. But then as we picked it up and looked closer it was what looked like, and apparently was what we thought to be blood. It was fucking creepy, and scared the hell out of both of us.

I'm a grown man of many years and I was completely freaked out by this. I was just starting to tell her that we needed to get the fuck out of here because looking at this, I found it to be completely odd and random. Suddenly, we started hearing loud thumps and crashes coming from the upstairs someplace (it sounded as though it was right above our heads). The sounds echoed through out the basement as it was big and empty. There were no voices, laughs or screams. All we heard were crashes, thumps, stomping, etc. We were so fucking scared at this point... To this day I've never been so scared in all my life.

We really had nowhere to go, so we scrambled and tried to hide as best as we could. We ran to the back of the building, still in the basement, and turned off the flashlight. We hid in a corner because there was no place left to go. We stood there holding one another in a small cove of the basement building for what seemed like many hours, shaking in one another's arms, as the noise above us would come and go. Finally

the noise died, and we found the courage to turn on the flashlight, listen some more, and then slowly creep up the stairs to the floor where you could exit the building. When we got to the top we made a run for the exit, and got to the street safely, but completely shaken. To this day I don't know what those sounds were, or what was in that jar. I've never been back to that place since that day 3 years ago. I don't talk to that girl anymore, but I will always remember that day there with her.

Okay, I'll talk more about hardcore in the next issue, I promise. I want to thank Matt Average, his wife Erin, and his big jock of a son Henry. These guys really made my stay in California this February amazing. It was also cool to see some great bands from around the world (Shank, Breakfast) at the Super Sabado Fest at Gilman. I also got to see some great Cali bands (Funeral Shock, Reagan SS, Deadfall, Holier Than Thou?). People sometimes take for granted the fact that we have such a great venue that still allows us to have such great shows. I'm sure by now many of you have heard of all the problems that the torching of that club in Rhode Island has brought to "the scene." Although it had nothing to do with "our scene," the trickle down effect is still apparent. Here in NY, the fire marshals have closed the doors to ABC No Rio. The club has existed for over a decade, and is probably the last place to do "DIY" shows in Manhattan. It's costly to have a punk scene here, much like LA, I guess. I've also heard that Burnt Ramen was closed down in California by the fire marshals. Don't take for granted what you have, things can fall apart just like that. Fight for your right. I can still be reached at: cryptocomx@aol.com; www.glomrecords.com



1. Liberals, the media, and my sordid past

The day after the war on Iraq started (this is the widely used terminology but we know that the war on Iraq has been ongoing for a decade, in the form of sanctions and almost daily bombings by the US and Britain), downtown San Francisco, home to many corporations which make a profit off of war, was shut down. Many others have written about it; I understand it was incredibly liberating to be in a temporarily liberated downtown San Francisco.

On one of the many lists I'm on, I read a complaint from a woman who was anti-war. She had a very strong belief that the war is wrong, but she was deeply troubled by what she saw as violence on the part of the protesters. She elaborated; she was talking about having seen on TV someone pulling drivers from their cars and punching them. Because friends of mine were there, I know what actually happened: a driver, infuriated by being delayed or perhaps in a fit of

patriotism, leapt from his car and began punching people left and right. Apparently he was a big dude, and folks were dropping like flies. People who saw this on tv said that it was shown with no context, so it wouldn't be that difficult to come to the conclusion this woman did.

Like many of my particular political persuasion, I get really irritated when so called liberals start whining about 'violence' on the part of the protesters. Especially because when it comes to violence against people, the perpetrator is almost always either in the employ of, or in support of, the state. I particularly get irritated when the cries of 'stop the violence' are referring to property destruction, as though that act trumps and eclipses the slaughter of Iraqis.

However, reading that woman's post, I was reminded of myself a decade ago. In January of 1991, I was living in Burlington, Vermont, in a somewhat crappy apartment with my boyfriend, who was a video store clerk and a drummer in a speed metal band. I was working full time in a child care center. I was not particularly political; I supported the ERA, and a woman's right to choose, and I was upset about environmental destruction, but I certainly hadn't developed any sort of a critique of the state. A lot of radical political activity went down in Burlington in the years I lived there, but I never checked it out.

When the gulf war started, I was appalled and terrified. I was some sort of pacifist at the time I suppose, and had a very basic opposition to war. I was proud of my congressman, Bernie Sanders, who said "this is a terrible night for all of humanity."

I watched the news and read the papers, and from that I learned that there were anti-war protests going on. Some high school students walked out of class and burned a flag, and other folks marched. I heard about a woman who was one of the main organizers of the protests who, when confronted by an pro-war dude, punched him in the face. I was so confused and disgusted by this. It made no sense to me, being violent at a peace rally (at the time I made no distinction between pro-peace and anti-war). I was upset by the war, and I wanted to protest, but I didn't want to be a part of such stupid behavior. And so I watched the war on tv and was totally isolated.

A couple of months later, I began to become better friends with the bassist from my boyfriend's speed metal band. He was a punk, a vegan (the first I'd known) and a feminist who did regular clinic defense at the local Planned Parenthood (where I went for my pap smears). He'd been involved in anti-war protests, and when I talked to him about it, I learned that the woman who I'd understood had punched a guy had in fact been punched herself. Talking to Dave, who I trusted to be honest with me, I realized that the newspaper had distorted the facts and that (gasp) I'd been lied to! It all seems so funny now, to think I was ever that naive. But I was. From that point on I developed a healthy hearty mistrust of the media.

Remembering that I was once one of those people decrying the "violence of the protesters" is helpful for me in remembering tolerance and patience. Because of the unprecedented enormity of the opposition to this war, there's a lot of people in the organizing and activism spaces, which are usually full of

hardened radicals, who have more moderate views, who are more likely to trust parts of the establishment. Hopefully, if we don't run 'em all out for being so irritatingly liberal, many of them will realize the enormity of the lies they're being told and develop increasingly radical politics.

2. Being a mom in times of war

I saw a picture of a dead Iraqi boy who was missing the top half of his head. I don't know how widely this picture was seen in the U.S.; I can't even remember where I saw it. I know that it is an upsetting picture under any circumstances.

I've seen the pictures of Iraqi families fleeing the war/the U.S. soldiers; parents and children and babies. I saw footage of a San Francisco cop rip a child off of his father's shoulders at an anti-war protest. I've heard news reports of truck loads of dismembered mothers and children. I saw television footage of U.S. soldiers taking a family out of their home to search for weapons; the utter terror on the faces of that family was like nothing I have ever seen.

All of this is upsetting and horrifying. My response to it is definitely altered by motherhood. I cannot see a picture of a dead or distressed child or baby without thinking of my baby. I can't hear about babies being killed by war without thinking about my baby. And when I do think about my baby in that context, my reaction is physical. My heart rate speeds up and sometimes I break into a sweat. When I saw the picture of the Iraqi boy who's head had been blown open, for an instant I KNEW how it would feel to be his mother. Assuming that this reaction is not limited to me but is common among mothers, I cannot understand why the mothers of the world allow war to continue.

I know that this idea of "mamas must hate war" is very reductionist and assumes that all mothers feel something like I do; it assumes that all mothers can sympathize with other mothers across race and nationality and ideologies. It feels a bit like biological determinism, and doesn't take into account the variety and complexity of moms and moming. And yet: I cannot understand why the mothers of the world allow war to continue.

Meanwhile, in the midst of the horror and grief and anger about this war, I wake up daily to a (usually) smiling baby; I fall asleep with her nestled in my arms. When I hold Natasha close, when she smiles and laughs at me, when she sticks her finger in my ear and chews on my chin, I feel good, in spite of the state of the world. Sometimes it is a daily struggle to set aside the my knowledge of the state of the world and my reaction to it in order to provide a sense of safety and well-being to Natasha, but I do it and I must do it.

And being a mom really brings home how in spite of the war, daily life (at least for me, white and safe here in the US) goes on. Since the war began, Natasha has rolled over from her belly to her back for the first time; she has had her first taste of banana and her first taste of apple. Whether the occupation of Iraq is peaceful or brutal, brief or extended, she'll continue to grow and learn, she'll continue to have developmental milestones and it's my responsibility to be there with her, noting and applauding each new skill, each new accomplishment.

I want Natasha to continue to approach the world with trust and curiosity and delight; I

want her to gain the skills to fully engage with the people and the world around her. So I tuck away my grief and anger in order to laugh with my child, and sometimes I feel a bit psychotic, a bit like I am holding two of me inside myself in order to pull this off, but I am determined not to let the war and its after effects derail my commitments to my child.

3. Being an anarchist/activist mom in times of war

When the people shut down the WTO ministerial in Seattle, I was there, a couple miles away in the legal support office. So I did not experience the shut down in the visceral way that people on the street did. I promised myself that next time, I would be out on the streets. March 20 was 'next time'; the people shut down the heart of San Francisco. And I was a couple miles away, in the legal support office.

Being a nursing mother means I cannot put myself in risky situations. Being a mom who's first child died means I am perhaps even less willing to put my child in questionable situations than other perfectly cautious parents. But it's hard to stay on the sidelines, to miss all the action.

In addition to wanting to experience the thrill, and wanting to throw my weight against the war machine in whatever way I can, I also know that strong bonds and community are often forged in the midst of intense organizing, in standing up to the man together, in sitting in jail cells together. I sometimes feel sad to be missing all of that. I have wracked my brain to find ways to contribute to the struggle, and my most recent conclusion is that, since I am already away from Natasha four days a week, I need to find ways to participate with 'babe in arms'.

I have so much more to say about this; about how there needs to be more ways to participate, that there needs to be a broader range of so-called radical actions, that the 'movement' needs to expand so as to be inclusive of people like me, that supporting the participation of moms and other parents requires much more than semi-sincere offers to babysit, but right now I have a deadline to meet and a baby to play with. So it will have to wait.

Matt Average

The other day a friend and I were sweating it out in the crawl of never ending LA traffic, having come back from watching a half-hearted open work out from Marco Antonio Barrera. Conversation centered around some of our favorite fighters. Will Trinidad come out of retirement? How would he do in a rematch with Hopkins? Who will win the rematch between De La Hoya and Mosley? Then somehow we started talking about how George W. Bush needs to have his ass kicked. And have it kicked good and hard. I'm talking about how someone needs to just walk up and sock the fucker dead in his mouth. Maybe plant an elbow nice and quick against his teeth. Having said this I'm probably going to be investigated and watched during the "war on terror." I never plan to have a job for the city or government anyway.

Bush reminds me of this kid I went to junior high school with named David Bakerman (last name has been changed). Like Bush, David was a clueless asshole who either didn't care about how his actions effected those around him, or was just so caught up in his own world that he didn't see it. David was the kind of guy who would stir shit up and then run to the teacher. We had cross country together. I have no idea what the choices are like today in school, but back then you either took an athletics class like football, basketball, cross country, track, etc. Or you enrolled in PE. Being a chronic nerd and punk, I knew if I enrolled in PE I would have to contend with the stoners. In those days, metal and punk did not mix, unlike today. A punk that goes to a metal show was guaranteed to get beat up by the metal heads and stoners. And the same would happen if a stoner or metal head walked into a punk show. So that struck PE off the list, leaving me with having to make a choice of what athletics class to enroll in. The only thing worse that stoners and metalheads were jocks. In the town I grew up in jocks practically had free rein. Moore, Oklahoma is what they call a "bedroom community." People only eat and sleep there, and commute to work in Oklahoma City or Norman, or any other surrounding town. From where I stood, it appeared the adults were living vicariously through their children. A year before I left for California I drove through Moore one last time and passed by the high school. On the streets that surround the campus the city had painted huge paw prints in honor of the team mascot, a lion. It was unreal. So anyway, having decided not to take PE, I had to choose what athletic class to take. No interest in team sports and being a loner, not to mention weighing a healthy 90 pounds when I was 14 I opted for cross country and track. That was the best decision I ever made in school. To this day I still run long distances, and find myself meditating with the miles, putting the past and the days ahead into perspective.

The people who made up the cross country team at my school were the biggest collection of nerds and dorks you would find anywhere in my town. Instead of talking about girls and "bitchin'" cars we would talk about Dungeons & Dragons, books, movies, comic, and music. Most people there listened to stuff like REM, The Judys, The Cure, and it was also through cross country that I was introduced to hip hop. There was an older student, a junior at the time, who was from Puerto Rico. Before and after the meets he would play stuff like Egyptian Lover, UTFO, Run-DMC, and the sort at the back of the bus and break dance. During track season we would go under the bleachers and watch break battles between students from other schools. Needless to say everyone pretty much got along great.

Then there was David. He reminded me a lot of Francis in "Stripes." "Don't none of you homos get any ideas." That sort of attitude. It was unspoken, but you knew not to bother socializing with this guy. In reference to his last name, we called him "Mastur." He thought we meant "master." Wishful thinking on his part. One time he decided to tell the teacher that I was carrying brass knuckles in my bag and that I had threatened him. Where and why he came up with this story I have no idea. Having heard that I

wished that I did have knuckles.

When the second season rolled around there were some new faces on the team. One of the new people in Cross Country was a kid named Hans. Hans was a tall kid from Germany who; in the tenth grade, lived alone in his own apartment. His dad had a girlfriend in another part of town, and didn't want his son around, so he paid Hans' rent with the stipulation that he stay out of dad's hair. You could see the turmoil in Hans' eyes. A nice guy, and pretty quiet, but you could see he had a lot of things going on in his mind.

Hans didn't have shit to lose. For some reason David felt it was his duty to fuck with Hans. Maybe he had something to prove. Who knows. But he would constantly taunt Hans and bust him for smoking on campus, or being late to class. People would always tell David to back off. "You better leave him alone. He'll fuck you up one day." David would then laugh it off, and say something like, "He's too stupid to do shit." This went on for a while. One day, as summer turned into fall, Hans told me and some of the other guys on the team he was going to take care of David. "Good," was the general reply. That afternoon everyone but David is quiet on the ten minute bus ride over to the high school campus. As soon as the bus comes to a stop in front of the field house no one gets up from their seat. David jumps up and starts walking towards the front door. Hans gets up right behind him. Everyone else follows Hans. The doors of the bus open.

"David."

David turns and is caught by a right across the ear. The punch sends him flying off the bus steps. Somehow he maintains his balance, despite being shaky. Obviously surprised, David turns around to see Hans coming at him with a confident and cool stride. David's steps are no more than desperate shuffles, and he can not gain any distance between him and his certain fate. Hans connects with a left to the side of David's head. In a flash David is curled up in a ball in the parking lot. Hans is kicking him so hard in the ribs it sounds like a basketball being bounced hard on the pavement. "Oh god... oh god..." We stood in shock and silence. With every kick and punch Hans threw everyone in the group somehow felt like they were the ones delivering the blows. Hans turned and walked away before the coach could make it outside. A few weeks later David returned to school with a left ear as black as charcoal. Hans eventually faded into the wood work. David was never the same again.

Three days into the US invasion of Iraq, a Friday night, I'm in the kitchen putting on a pot of water to boil for pasta. The plan for the evening was vegging out in front of the TV watching "Raging Bull." Ever since Wednesday the ten hours and upwards drone of helicopters, and the frequent bursts of sirens from a zealous LAPD start blending in with the everyday background noise of traffic and car alarms. Then I hear a voice on a PA announce, "Get off the streets and sidewalks or you will be subject to arrest." Wha?!? I raise the blinds and see a helicopter circling overhead with that annoying floodlight flashing in the parking lots of the businesses around my apartment. People are running to their cars. I run outside, down the alley to Santa Monica Blvd. and turn the corner in front of the

Bank of America building between Butler and Colby. A group of demonstrators are being corralled in front of the automotive store on Butler. A few break off and run into the streets shouting the tired slogan of "Whose streets? Our streets!" Looking lost and deflated they step back onto the sidewalk and walk back over to the side where the cops dressed in riot gear have the other demonstrators. Someone is on a bullhorn shouting "The whole world is watching! The whole world is watching!" People from the restaurants and movie theater walk out to witness the spectacle. Within half an hour the neighborhood people and patrons outnumber the protesters. To the dismay of the police more are sympathetic to the cause than opposed. I was happy to learn that my neighbor felt the same way.

At one point one guy gets on top of the automotive store and drapes a banner of the planet Earth over the side. My suspicions of protesting being tres chic are confirmed when I ask a woman about the huge picket sign with an open mouthed Bush and "War Monger" in white written across it. "Did you make that?" "No, I got it in San Francisco," she says with the same air someone would say, "No, I bought it at Fred Seagals." Despite this and the growing presence of riot police and the appearance of Chief Bratton, for the first time in LA I actually felt some sense of community that is not allowed in the day to day situation and dominance of the automobile. For a brief second I was reconsidering my decision to leave this place in the next couple years. But it's time for a change, and a future in this town is not in my plans.

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Mike Arria

Political Update

If you attended the Conservative Political Action Conference on January 30th, in addition to being able to hear luncheon-speaker Dick Cheney talk, you would have also had the opportunity to purchase a tantalizing, vinyl bumper sticker emblazoned with the slogan, "NO MUSLIMS-NO TERRORISM."

These particular stickers were yanked from the merchandise tables prior to the Vice President's speech, however, they were simply not displayed and you could snag one at a lowered price if you inquired about them to a cashier.

Although standard dictums pertaining to politics tend to be incorrect, this particular situation generates one that I am sure will maintain a certain level of validity for years to come: You can tell a lot about an administration based on the discounted, xenophobic paraphernalia its fans keep stashed under their cash registers.

Dick Cheney isn't the first member of this administration to have connections to spiteful commodities. Attorney General John Ashcroft once defended leaders of the Confederacy in an issue of *Southern Partisan*; a magazine that also dabbled in the clothing business-printing up T-shirts that celebrated the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Of course the selection of John Ashcroft as Attorney General was perceived by many to be a reward to the not-so-compassionate-conservatives for not saying so much when Bush's campaign rhetoric got a little too compassionate. Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and other individuals who also believe the terror attacks of September 11th 2001 were an act of God designed to shed awareness on the evils of abortion, homosexuality, and the ACLU did remain suspiciously silent when it came to Dubya's stance on a number of issues and this newfound sullenness did nothing but assist Republicans in redefining their image.

John Ashcroft symbolizes a fact that Republicans probably don't want you to think about too much: there's a fair number of people who vote Republican who also would conceivably rock clothing praising the murder of Lincoln and casually adorn their cars with stickers calling for the immediate eradication of Muslims.

Despite populist rhetoric and an administration that features a couple prominent black faces (proving that black people can recite conservative banter just as well as whites), a distressing Republican attitude towards minorities frequently makes itself visible.

A recent example... on January 15, Martin Luther King's birthday, George W. Bush had White House lawyers exact all their energy, convince whatever members of the Supreme Court that the University of Michigan should not be permitted to factor an applicant's minority status into its admissions calculations, and by extension, neither should any other American university. While applying to Yale, Bush (obviously) received something that is commonly referred to as "legacy Affirmative-Action" (on a side note: doesn't the word legacy seem far too distinguished in this particular case? What does the Bush family have a legacy of? Oil? Being rich and white? Having rumors of anti-Semitism surrounding the family name?) Let's break this down: a frat-kid gets into an Ivy League school, despite his mediocre grades and obvious lack of comprehension when it comes to the English language, based primarily on the fact he was born into a powerful, opulent family and now believes that students shouldn't receive a similar push even if the color of their skin has had a direct effect on the fact their family legacy has been considerably less extravagant than his. The hypocrisy is so ridiculously blatant that it makes one wonder why you didn't find Bush on television in the following days, attempting to clarify and explain his comments the way Trent Lott did.

Of course it was former Senate-Majority leader Trent Lott who made an offhand comment suggesting this country wouldn't be experiencing its current problems if everyone voted for Strom Thurmond during the election of 1948. During Thurmond's campaign, along with a myriad of similar vows, he promised that he would keep "niggers" out of white swimming pools. Which leads us to the conclusion that Lott perceives the insistence of blacks to swim alongside Caucasians in public swimming pools as a problem that needs to be terminated.

Lott did everything in his power to salvage his flailing reputation and maintain his position; even appearing on BET, nudged between the latest videos from Jay-Z and Ludacris, to insist that he supports Affirmative Action. His attempts

were futile and, after all, a Democrat had already murdered the concept of the apology already.

Bill Clinton was utterly obsessed with the apology. He apologized for everything that had ever gone wrong in the course of human civilization and the apology became disassociated with any level of logic or context. The apology was pronounced dead shortly after Clinton decided it would be a good idea to apologize for his country not intervening to stop mass-slaughter in Rwanda. The nerve of that guy! People like you and me have been apologizing for being late for coffee-dates and acting like assholes for years; only to have the leader of the free-world casually apologize for genocide and invalidate the apology altogether.

Democrat's love for ruining things got completely out of hand when they made a conscious decision to ruin their entire party. One would presuppose that the fact Clinton/Gore rose to victory during the early '90s would persuade the Democratic party to adopt the Cobain-inspired shotgun blast to face method of self-termination and end it all quickly. However, their method of suicide seems to be more like the political manifestation of attempting to overdose on muscle relaxants. The first pill was popped when the Democrats ran no one against Gore in the primary of last election and the situation has gotten increasingly more disturbing ever since. Granted, if you're feeling generous you can write off the Democrats acceptance of the Patriot Act as a historical consequence of an apathetic nation. However, you cannot excuse Democrats authorizing Bush to do what he deems fit regarding Iraq and you certainly can't justify some of those same Democrats working up the nerve to criticize Bush's foreign policy choices weeks later. There should be an Iraqi Entertainment Television station hatched for the sole purpose of making Democrats explain themselves between music videos.

Potential Democratic candidates such as Rep. Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), and Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) have all echoed the President's wartime rhetoric. Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) voted for the Iraq resolution, voiced concern over the invasion, and then finally concluded Colin Powell made a compelling case for intervention. Such ambivalence is not generally apparent in political banter and more than a couple people have pointed out this may have been a trick implemented by Kerry to woo the anti-war crowd while maintaining support from the pro-war faction. If you're keeping score at home: Democrats have given a bad name to apologies and ambivalence.

The only two potential candidates who have taken any sort of commendable stance on the issue of Iraq are the Rev. Al Sharpton and Dennis Kucinich (D-OH).

The possible Kucinich candidacy is interesting because his compassion for innocent Iraqi civilians is apparently just as intense as his compassion for fetuses. Nowadays, a solid fight for the preservation of a woman's right to choose isn't something you can immediately assume in a politician no matter how progressive their record is. If this fact perplexes you, simply remind yourself that Bernie Sanders is a congressman in this country. Sanders is a registered Independent Socialist but if you examine Sander's voting

record, starting with his support of NATO's war against Kosovo, you realize that either (a) Bernie Sanders does not know the definition of the word socialist or (b) Bernie Sanders knows the definition of the word socialist and registered as one so that he would have something entertainingly ironic to bring up at social functions. In the aftermath of September 11th, 2001 you had journalists like William Safire, a guy who used to pen speeches for Nixon, supplying some of the most penetrating commentary in response to the Patriot Act and you had Christopher Hitchens, a guy who used to be one of the best left-wing journalists on the planet, drifting into a nonsensical world of pro-Bush sentiments. What does this all mean? If nothing else, it means we live in exciting times.

It was the excitement of the political climate that made Ralph Nader's exhilarant 2000 campaign possible. However, one of the biggest mistakes of the campaign was its unvarying insistence that there was no difference between Gore and Bush. Such a proclamation was just as cynical as reiterating the boring, "lesser of two evils" argument. There was a difference between Gore and Bush but that difference wasn't sizable enough to get people excited about politics. It wasn't a difference that people could vote for with a clear conscience.

If Democrats want sympathy or votes, they are going to have to resurrect their deceased party and formulate an intense opposition to the right-wing juggernaut while in zombie-form. I don't see this happening but wishful thinking never hurt anyone. In the meantime, hopefully viable third-party candidates will evolve so that citizens of this country will have, at least, someone they can vote for without feeling like a dick. When it comes to national politics the revolution is, perhaps, intended to be incremental.

So, it's almost 2004—we inch a little closer to another pointless spectacle. Just remember—last time around, the guy with the most votes didn't win and there is certainly no reason to be optimistic about either political party. Bargain bin anti-Islam decals may initially seem like a steal, but you're going to get lied to for free. Don't listen.

—Mike Arria

Jonathon Taylor

A Brief Introduction to Acousticism

Over the past twenty years or so, the human populace of the world has been acknowledging that there is a time and a place for everything, and that the rush to modernize the world has far overrun that simple axiom. More and more first world countries are beginning to turn their eyes towards cleaning up the environment and cleaning up the ethics behind most of their movements. This is, of course, the theory that they preach and if were to be idealistic, this is the theory they practice.

However, it has also become clear that as pontiffs and so-called leaders declare the world a bigger, better, safer place to live, they are more often than not just telling us what we want to hear.

It seems likely that the world will never improve unless the source of its plight becomes the source of its pleasure. That plight is mankind, that pleasure is equality between all beasts and flora; all the living and all the dead, too.

This goal set forth by mother nature is not as lofty as we'd like to believe. Nay, it's actually quite simple. The golden rule learned in grade school is the perfect keystone for the whole equation: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Simple enough. Though long since out of practice by most Americans and by many members of the United Nations, this is still a rule we can apply to our day to day lives. Don't want someone to shoot you? Don't try and shoot someone yourself. Tired of people robbing you? Don't rob from others. Don't like being starved? Don't starve others. Very simple. This applies to positives, too. Want the world to change? Change it yourself. Want people to be nicer to each other? Treat people with what you believe is kindness.

Simple, is it not?

Alongside this simple practice is a notion that has been dubbed by Ventilation Through A Grating (an enigmatic and evasive congregation of minds and philosophies) as "Acousticism." At the risk of sounding like a high-school English class essay, let me quote a possible dictionary definition for "acoustic," "Pertaining to sound created without the use of electrical means." This being a possibility for what "acoustic" can mean, alongside numerous other definitions referring to sound and perception, we can extrapolate the definition to further mean, "pertaining to creation without the use of electrical means." Metaphorically, this is a reference to creation without the reliance upon a great vehicle, such as electricity, currency, legislation, et cetera, et cetera.

This applies to world views in that the individual believes he or she is far removed from the rest of the game; that he or she is merely a spectator in the ways of the globe. Not true, for society is created by the aggregate of each individual man, woman and child, and the entire view of life as we know it is a blend of all the life and the inanimate the surround this blue and green ball.

Applications of Acousticism are numerous. For instance, at the most basic level, music in this day and age has become such and industry that typical musician discussion will eventually necessitate a reference to income or expense. Recording costs, venues costs, equipment costs, electricity costs, and so on and so forth. This is how we are made to feel like spectators. No music seems to be able to be created without a months notice. Yet, this is not true. We all know we can bang on a desk or hum in order to create sound. We can pull a rubber band taut and pluck it to make a tune. So why should we feel the need to generate income and purchase products in order to seem like conventional musicians when the world around us holds many options for us already? Why should we play the keyboard or play the harmonica when we can make our own keyboards, our own harmonicas, call them whatever we want, and be our own producers? A venue is wherever we want to go when we don't need a power source but our own bodies and hands. An audience is always waiting as long as people desire to be

inspired and entertained. Since no money goes in, no money need come out. The cycle is broken.

In this way, Acousticism becomes an aspect of day to day life. Why pay for tomatoes when one can grow his or her own in his backyard? Why buy petroleum products when one can merely find his or her own alternatives? It is up to the individual to reclaim each's personality back, and make good use of his time in this world. Call it Acousticism, call it whatever you want, but find your own words, your own reasons, and live for those. The status quo can only remain if you, yes you, let it.

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Hey there *HeartattaCk* readers! I hear this issue's theme is to be education. Education? Like, we know things, and we have to teach them to others, who know less? I think education has to be a two-way street, people always learning from and listening to each other, not just being teachers or students. Often, we don't even know how to listen to each other in such a way here in the punk community, let alone in our interactions with the rest of the world.

Last issue, fellow columnist Eric wrote a sort of over-the-top attack on the collective I work in. I sent back a letter to the editor, and he and I ended up in dialogue. In the spirit of encouraging this kind of dialogue, in which people work out their differences civilly instead of attacking each other, I'm reprinting our exchange here—hope it provides an example of how people can open up a space to learn from each other, even when the interactions start off on a hostile note.

For further such interactions, contact us at CrimethInc. Mediation Services/2695 Rangewood Drive/Atlanta, GA 30345/USA; www.crimethinc.com

Dearest Eric, and other HaC writers/readers—

I hate to waste everyone's time with internal squabbles, but the open communication that can take place in the punk scene is really important to me, so I feel I have to use this space to respond to Eric's anti-CrimethInc. bashing (a sport at which fledgling writers sometimes test their wings) in the last issue. I'm afraid that the impersonal medium here—as we're not talking face to face, in a way that would facilitate concern for each other's feelings and so on—might make this turn out like an internet flame-war, so I want to make it clear from the beginning that my chief concern here is to initiate a dialog that can result in more trust and community, not to prove I'm "right."

First, Eric, before you read my response (just in case it changes your perspective on all this), could you please go to www.infoshop.org and to the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists and repeat your points about CrimethInc. being too violent? Other anarchists there, using exactly the same source material you reference, keep complaining that we're not invested *enough* in direct action, that we only encourage lifestyle changes. They call us pacifists, you call us street thugs—what's a boy

to think?

Your last column is fascinating in structure, if in nothing else, in that you start out by knocking down a straw-man objection to your "street thug" smear—perhaps the only objection I can't imagine any of us offering, no less—and then only afterwards do you go about the tricky business of trying to make it stick. CrimethInc. projects have been attacked in a variety of ways over the years, and defended in a variety of ways, too, but never have any of us just said "Look, we're trying to be hypocrites, Okay? Leave us alone!" No, I'd say most of us have very clearly thought-out reasons for believing in property destruction and the like as occasionally-useful tactics for achieving a better world—you'd do better to address our arguments at their strongest points (try reading "The Violence/Non-Violence Question" in *Inside Front* #13) than simply to invent weaknesses. It's really bad form for you to attribute defenses to us we wouldn't even embrace—it just makes your particular critique irrelevant, however relevant a to-the-point critique might be. That text about hypocrisy was intended to encourage folks to feel they don't have to be perfect in order to have the right to act (that's important!), not to encourage people to make excuses for their own duplicities. Readers who reduce everything to its lowest denominator—pro-hypocrisy, pro-violence, anti-CrimethInc., whatever—make us poor writers want to give up and just write slogans instead of nuanced arguments that actually address the complexity of the world. Fortunately, others read with more subtlety.

Your allegations of our street-thuggishness are based on a couple paragraphs (out of thousands) taken aggressively out of context and offered no benefit-of-the-doubt. That's a way to breed contention rather than understanding, if that's what you want! The column you took objection to was—obviously!—not about the liberating effects of hooligan violence (duh!)—it was about the importance of feeling that total transformation can take place. The specific example, a child witnessing a spontaneous celebration that transforms an urban area, was not an endorsement of sports riots (seriously, come on!), it was rather a story of a moment in one kid's life when anything seemed possible. Any closer, less hostile reading should reveal that. As for your reference to our Unabomber piece (which is a good seven years old at this point and not too representative of our current approaches), yes, it was one of the more deliberately provocative pieces ever published under the CrimethInc. moniker, but its point was not at all to encourage violence, but rather to emphasize the fact that the bomber in question was at least taking responsibility for his own decisions, rather than apathetically going along with "public opinion"—an approach responsible at this very moment for all the deaths going on in Iraq, Palestine, and elsewhere, and thus far more destructive than all the terrorism ever carried out.

Not to say that terrorism and war are different—no, they're the same thing, it's just a question of scale. This may surprise you, but most direct-action anarchists (and everyone I know involved in CrimethInc.) believe that, too. I suspect you may just lack experience with what direct action actually means in practice. I wish

you could have stood with me in Quebec when the black bloc was holding off the police to secure a space for pacifist protesters. I wish you could have met some of those folks and gotten to know what caring, gentle people most of us are, despite the sensationalist reputation mainstream journalists (and some underground ones, perhaps like yourself) have given them. Hell, maybe you *were* there, and had a bad experience—you should at least write about that, instead of throwing around slurs like "street thugs." Some of the most loving, supportive, caring people I know have broken bank windows to call attention to injustice—this does not a "street thug" make.

Anarchists who believe in direct action, who believe that the capitalist institution of property itself is more "violent" than property destruction—and that's no small proportion of the anarchist movement!—have been involved in punk rock since its inception, despite your alarmism (jeez, comparing us to Christians, 'shna's and Earth Crisis fans! What the fuck!). You say you were involved in punk twelve years ago, so you'll remember as clearly as I do what Profane Existence was doing back then, which was not much different from what we and many others in punk are involved in today. If you want to attack the entire punk heritage of revolutionary anticapitalist/anarcha-feminist direct action, fine, but you'll need stronger arguments than the ones you gave. If it's you want to take issue with any approach that strays from the strict pacifist line, I suggest you read ole' Ward's *Pacifism as Pathology* and respond to the arguments in it, not the fallacies you project onto your fellow anarchists' texts.

The bottom line for me is that, as fellow DIY punks, we should be able to discuss this as comrades and come to an understanding (or at least mutual respect), or at least try to *before* we start publicly attacking each other in widely-circulated papers. I wish you'd just written us about this yourself first—if nothing else, then we could have had a more intelligent exchange about the issue, which would have benefited HaC readers and everyone else. We're good folks, patient, always open to discussion and constructive criticism—I challenge you to find anyone who knows me, or Stef, or any of the other kids involved in CrimethInc. projects who would call any of us "street thugs."

In conclusion: I mean no disrespect to you or your ideas, and I hope we can be friends or at least allies in this struggle for a better world; I just ask, kindly, that you address these issues, especially whatever differences of opinion we might have, in a way that is less needlessly divisive, more attentive to the facts, and more constructive. Thanks very much for reading this, and for trying to interpret it in that spirit even when I got carried away with my own childish hostilities. Yours sincerely, Brian (CrimethInc. Sub-Collective, Local 406)

Brian and everyone else who finds this topic of interest,

Perhaps there was a jump in my logic that equated all folks involved in CrimethInc. with street thug behavior. I am sure that there are folks involved who would never condone such nonsense. That said, the quotes and points I brought up in my column last time around were

CrimethInc.'s words, not mine. I didn't invent them. I cited them. Brian took the time to point out the argument of context. Again, perhaps there is some validity in his comments there. He mentioned the stuff about the Unabomber being 7 years old. Admittedly, that's a good chunk of time. However, that essay appeared in a collection of writing published in the year 2000. Apparently, somebody still thought it was worth printing 3 years ago! I completely agree 100% with you, Brian, that taking responsibility for your own decisions is of the utmost importance. You really said something important there. What I find at fault with using the Unabomber as an example of this (VERY important) aspect of anarchism or social justice theory is the issue of coercion.

It doesn't matter if it's the Unabomber blowing people up or a black masked kid at a demonstration smashing out windows or a football riot where "anything seemed possible." In each of these examples (and many more that include "property destruction") there is one point that I think many people miss. That violent act, smashing out that window or setting that trash can on fire, is an act of intimidation. It may not be intimidating to the person who smashed the storefront or the person who threw the trash can. It IS, however, intimidating to others around them either who aren't involved in the demonstration, or who ARE involved in the demo and never wanted to break the place up.

It is in this act of intimidation that the people doing property destruction are recreating the state with their actions. The police could not exist if there wasn't the intimidation and fear that goes along with their institution. The police use that fear and intimidation to coerce people into doing things. By running around smashing things up, there are people who are impacted by those actions, people that are afraid. If a person is afraid, that person IS NOT FREE. I don't want to be responsible for taking away another person's freedom. I don't want to be an accomplice to the actions of individuals that ultimately intimidate, instill fear and coerce others. Those are the actions of governments and police. If we really want to make a difference, do we perform the same actions that the cops and the state do? If that's revolution, I don't want it. I want something different from the fear and coercion that exists now.

I appreciate your response to my column, Brian. I also appreciate the dialog. By the by, I have read Churchill's Pacifism as Pathology. It still didn't make me think it's okay to run around doing the things I've already talked about. You mentioned in your letter, Brian, that there are complexities to these issues. You stated that "nuanced arguments" help in exploring these things. The issues we're throwing around are complex. I think it's very important to keep the goal of a just, free society in mind when dealing with these issues. It boils down to respect and responsibility. If I'm respecting people, I'm not intimidating them or coercing them. Then, I have to take responsibility for the actions that I have done. I don't want to recreate the state with my actions and I don't want to be an accomplice to actions that do. I have a feeling you don't either, but that we're looking at this from different viewpoints. In Peace, Eric xxx

Eric—

I really don't disagree with anything you write in your most recent piece. I agree absolutely that creating safe spaces is critical. At the same time, I have to say that this world is currently not a safe place for anyone, and changing it is going to take (in my opinion) a readiness to try a lot of different approaches in a lot of different contexts—if I scare someone by blocking traffic wearing a mask, to call attention to the slaughter in Iraq, am I recreating the state, or contesting it? Should I just write letters to my elected representatives instead? I mean, I already try to baby-sit for folks, talk my friends through their troubles, provide support and safe space wherever I can, but I think it's foolish to think all the totally fucked capitalist/imperialist/etc. stuff going on can be ended without somebody being scared somewhere along the way.

Also, I have to address the way you conducted yourself in this instance—not to prove you wrong about the importance of safe spaces, but rather because I think we really have to work on adjusting the coercive/competitive ways we've been taught by domination culture to interact even in our own communities. You could have approached me or any of us before publicly branding us "street thugs." That was NOT a way to breed trust and mutual respect. As someone involved in the insider anarchist thing for a good decade now, I'm constantly saddened by the competitive, aggressive ways even the most avowedly pacifist of us treat each other in our competitions for ideological "correctness." I think your last column is, unfortunately, a good example of this—I really hope we can all learn (I'm NOT downplaying my own shortcomings!!) to start discussions off on the right foot, with respect, and giving others the benefit of the doubt.

Benefit-of-the-doubt, and my talk of nuances, means recognizing that not every text is binary: either pro- or anti-violent tactics, etc. If I write about something that you could say is violent but I do so to bring out some other aspect of it, that does NOT mean I'm pro-violence, it just means that the world is complicated, sometimes opposites are intricately bound up with one another, and we have to be able to look at things in all their complexity, not just vote "for or against" them. Example: I'm against the Unabomber's tactics, obviously, but I think it's interesting to point out that he evaluated how he should make his decisions according to a different set of justifications than most North Americans. Even in the response you just sent me, you're still not allowing for the possibility that one could discuss such an issue without implicitly endorsing violence. In doing so, you're practically "doing violence," in a manner of speaking, to the discussion, by putting words in my mouth and refusing to listen when I tell you that they don't represent my values.

So where do I stand? Here's a little story, since we're now in personal conversation, not competing before an audience of thousands. A couple days ago, at an anti-war demonstration, a big man who had come to heckle us hit me in the face. For the first time in my 28 years in a situation like that, I felt no desire for revenge—I wasn't scared of him, I felt centered in myself, and I was able to stand there, still blocking his way to my friends he'd been heckling, without losing my cool or becoming violent myself. I was

really excited to discover myself responding like that, after being raised as a macho boy! In that case, it would have helped no one for me to have lost my cool and let the situation degenerate further into violence, even though he'd already hit me. At the same time, I have to say this—what's happening in Iraq, Palestine, even here in the U.S.A. is totally fucking unacceptable to me, and if I could do something to save those murdered people and wasted lives, even if it was scary to some coddled liberal, I'd do it: not because I want to scare them, not because I want revenge on anyone, but because for me, these atrocities have to end, and I'm desperate to see it happen in my lifetime. That desperation doesn't change my deliberation about which tactics are most effective in different situations, but many years of political action have convinced me that in some cases you comfort the afflicted, in some cases you hold signs, and in some cases you have to create a ruckus (YES, with as much respect for everyone's needs and feelings as possible) to get things changing. In those moments when ruckuses must be made, I hope to do so with the same peace in me that I felt when that guy hit me, since it is indeed dangerous to play with the fire of conflict. Still, our masters aren't gonna lay down their guns just because we ask them to. Even Gandhi was backed up by a militant wing—that's why the colonists had to listen to him (same with MLK and Malcolm X).

I hope you and I will one day have the pleasure of complementing each other similarly, each applying the tactics we feel most comfortable with, in a way that makes the other's actions more effective at making the world a better place. I'm game, and we don't have to agree with each other about everything first—we just have to show respect to each other, and figure out what goals we have in common. Here's to hoping that can happen.

Anyway, that's all for now. Yours sincerely, Brian

Hey Brian,

I'm glad that we found, at least, the common ground to agree on certain things. We also disagree, but there is NO harm in that.

I am a little concerned that you bring up the ideas of respect a couple different times in your response to me. That's MOST certainly a valid concern, but you make innuendo that I am basically a "liberal" democrat type who has never been involved in any direct action and who "just doesn't understand what it's like, man." Come on, dude. We've both been at this whole thing for years.

If you think it was fucked up that I took my column to criticize CrimethInc., I'm sorry, but it is an opinion piece. I also wrote a bunch of stuff about voting and school and inspirations. It was a subject that was on my mind.

Seriously, your story about the demo you went to the other day was amazing. If you wrote about THAT in a CrimethInc. publication, I'd be blown away. You have a knack for pointing out that what we're doing here is multi-faceted... very textured. I realize that. I just know that, for me, it's not going to get better by me exercising my muscles and my capacity to scare folks.

Look, I don't know you. But me? I'm a 235 pound white man with a big beard. I

probably make some people feel uneasy when I walk into a store. I hate that. For me, that's one of the things I deal with. My personal struggle is to disarm. For me, that's the way it needs to be done. And, the reflection of that action, I feel should be evident in my other actions, too. Maybe you don't have the same situation going on... and I totally respect that. Different people are at different places. Maybe it's unfair to place everyone in the same boat as me. I just, obviously, as we've discussed, have a difficult time going the other route.

The local chapter of the Thomas Merton Center is sponsoring a solidarity march up here soon... with everyone having bandanas. They want the media and everyone else to know that we're all in this together. Different tactics (although I am uncomfortable with that term) working together... that kind of thing. I support that, believe it or not. About a month ago I was at a demonstration up here and some black masked folks smashed up a window or two. I didn't stop them, nor do I think anyone else should have.

See, I don't want to tell anyone else what to do, either. I know that might sound funny, because the last few things I've written might have come off preachy, but I don't. Each individual has to make decisions for themselves. I realize and respect that. If someone asks me, I'll give them my two cents (and that is how I look at HaC approaching me to do a column for them), but I'm not going to take a brick in the face to save a Starfucks window.

I guess I try to think about what the middle American household thinks of actions. I use my family as a barometer a lot. What do they think when actions get violent... how do they react? What if it's cop initiated violence vs. demonstrators breaking windows or throwing trash cans? What is the difference in their emotions? What about the people where I work? What do they think and feel about it?

Sometimes I think that the intimidating stuff and the property destruction harms the way people look at a demo more than if things were conducted in other ways.

Why do I give a crap about public opinion so much? If I wasn't concerned with public opinion, I would take the time and energy to do something personal... either wear a T-shirt or button that made a statement, maybe meditate, write a song, write a 'zine, spend time with the cats, drink some tea on the porch or something along those lines. The VERY POINT of a demonstration IS PUBLIC OPINION! To do stuff that makes "the public" (a dangerously large term, I know) think activists are worthless assholes is rough when the very aim of public demonstration is to send a message to the public.

Is this the only way to look at this? Of course not. I do, however, think it's a valid concern.

Oh yeah, that comment about writing letters to my "elected officials" was a low blow, man! Come ON! Seriously, I would hope you know I don't go in for that jive.

I'm glad that we're writing to one another, and I know that you will continue to do what you feel in your heart is right and I'll continue to do in my heart what I feel is right. You said it well, that maybe we'll be in a situation when we'll be complementing each other. In a

way, just by expressing these things, I think we are.

I do want you to know that I am in NO way trying to tell you (or anybody else) what to do. As anarchists (or folks concerned with social justice, or whatever) we need to tell ourselves what to do. That's hard. But, that's also a worthwhile struggle. In Peace, Eric xxx

Eric—

Now we're getting somewhere. Before I get into your most recent email, I have a proposal: how about we just use the CrimethInc. column in the next issue of HaC to print our discussion of this topic (rather than just the beginnings of it in the letters section), hopefully as a positive example to the community of people turning conflict into dialogue and eventually solidarity? Let me know if you're comfortable with that (quickly, if you can, as the deadline is swiftly approaching).

I agree with you about disagreeing: it's not only harmless, but it's a GOOD thing—that's what I love about anarchist communities, all the different perspectives, hopefully coexisting. And that's what bothered me so about the tone of your initial column (for which a simple apology would suffice): you didn't contact any of us to discuss your concerns, you simply declared to the world that we were a Rush Limbaugh-esque street thug menace that would "hopefully burn out quickly." The tone of your piece wasn't conducive to coexistence or cooperation, while your more recent letters have been. I think it's interesting how impersonal forms, especially internet discussion forums but also columns sections in magazines like *HeartattaCk*, can make it easy for people to be hostile to others without considering them as people, in ways they never would if they were interacting with the others face to face. Thus happens most of all when we feel there is an audience we must perform for: we struggle to "defeat" our opponent at any cost, in order to impress the anonymous masses we imagine watching from the sidelines. Had you met me or Harry or Hib in person, you would never have accused us of being street thugs, and you would have waited to hear our own answers to your concerns before attributing your strange "hypocrisy" rationalization to us without even asking. One of my own efforts to increase peace in the world has been to try to behave towards others as if they are with me in person, even if we are separated by the mediation of the internet.

In that spirit, I want to apologize for my comments about letter-to-their-representative-writing liberals. I didn't make any really explicit accusations, but the implications were there. You see, I'm still working on learning to curb my own hostility in these situations, too!

You mention that you're a 235-pound white man with a beard. Yes, now we're getting somewhere! It makes perfect sense that an important part of your self-transformation would be finding ways to break down the power dynamics between yourself and others—it's awesome that you're thinking about that, and I totally support you deciding not to participate in actions you fear could intimidate others. Myself, I'm a white guy, too, but I'm 120 pounds! That's always functioned to my advantage, because it means people don't find me very threatening, and

in some ways it gives me a wider range of action in terms of what I can do without people being intimidated. Incidentally, that's something I've always loved about black blocs in this hemisphere—it's usually a bunch of 120 pound boys and girls (blame veganism?), not all that intimidating, just brave kids.

I guess the important thing here is that you have to be able to choose the approach that is right for you (I'm trying to respect your dislike of the term "tactic") without needing to condemn everyone else taking a different approach. As a 235-pound white guy, you might be able to give another 235-pound white guy some good perspective on which approach might be the most liberating for everybody involved, but it's certainly not your place to tell a Zapatista woman to put her gun down—as I'm sure you'd agree. As for the 120 pound kids involved in your own counter-culture, please do give voice to your misgivings about our approach—just try to do it in a way that doesn't create rifts and hostility, thanks.

About public opinion (as represented by your family...?) and property destruction—it's interesting to note that when white activists imagine the "mainstream" of this country, they always think of their parents, even though the majority of people in this hemisphere are no longer white working or middle class families. I think it's a sort of subtle ethnocentrism to imagine that our parents represent "America"... on the other hand, we do know more about our parents than we can know about other people's parents, so I guess they make one decent gauge (out of many) for considering how our actions will look.

I, too, think about how my actions will look to others when I'm participating in a demonstration—and seriously, I don't think the window-smashers you're talking about are doing what they do just out of selfish reasons, either (otherwise, they'd do it when there weren't so many pigs around!). But I want to bring up that there are a few different ways a public action can be meant to influence public opinion. In one case, the one you recognize, it can be meant to persuade or encourage: "Oh, look at those peace demonstrators—maybe I should work towards peace, too!" or "Look how many peace demonstrators there are—maybe I can come out of the closet about my own political beliefs, too!" But there are other possibilities. Those who are conscious that they are more radical than others can use this position to discourage others from going along with bad things: "Last time I voted for Bush, he did a lot of stupid stuff, and then all these fucking kids chained themselves together and shut down traffic, which was a pain in the ass—so this time, I'm going to vote for somebody that won't throw the country into such turmoil."

Finally, there's something else to bring up in reference to the question of "making a good impression upon the public"—you mentioned considering the opinions of the people you work with, now I want to talk about the people I worked and live with. In all my time working shitty, minimum-wage jobs, and all the time since then when I've traveled and lived among jobless and homeless folks, the perspective on activism that I've heard over and over from them was that it just didn't go far enough. The folks who made the Rodney King riots happen, the folks who are

really getting fucked over by capitalism worst of all, many of them are ready to fight for a better world, but the symbolic sign-waving many of us activists go in for is not attractive to them because it would endanger them more without actually changing anything. I have heard people from those backgrounds give respect to direct actions against the enemies we all have in common. Maybe those people are potential allies whose perspectives we should consider when we choose our approaches, at least as much as we do the perspectives of our parents.

There are a thousand ways to make revolution, and most of them don't involve rocks and plate glass; and whatever we do, it is critical that we do it out of love and desire for justice, not out of anger or resentment or feelings of powerlessness. I just want to emphasize, above all, that peace isn't just something we work towards, it's something we make (or destroy) every moment in ourselves and between each other. This dialogue has been my attempt to make peace with you. I appreciate you working towards the same thing with me—and I hope if your column this issue criticizes someone, that it's clear, it's friendly, supportive, constructive criticism! Let me know if there's ever anything any of us can do for you. Solidarity and sincerity, Brian

Hey Brian,

Yeah, printing the letters in the column is a fine idea. I can't type now, but I'll respond to you soon. In Peace and Solidarity, Eric xxx

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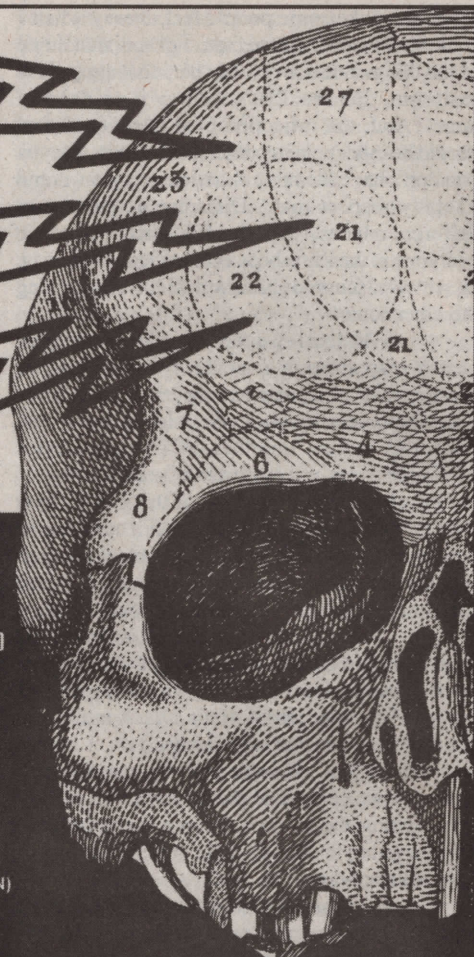
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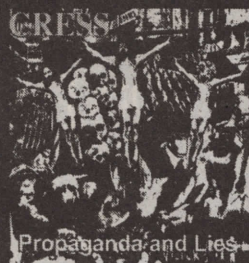
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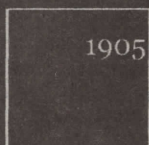
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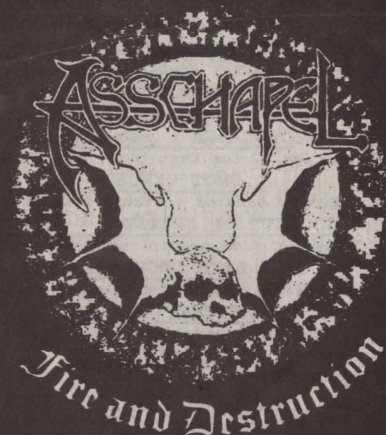


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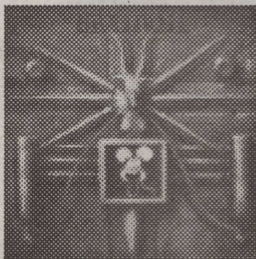
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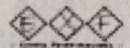
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5 tracks. This French band plays it like they used to in the early nineties, but they also have the sense to include some new influences. They chose dub which is not my favorite genre at all, but they pull it off really well. The songs now often have some sort of laid-back quieter part that is intriguing and new and very different from all other emo bands around today. What you get in the end is an album that gets better and deeper with each listen. Definitely one of the best European bands around! MH (151 Rue Saint-Pierre/1400 Caen/France)

ARAKI • Ikara CD

Okay, so I have a complaint. I don't know what the fuck this is called. I don't know exactly what this band's name is. The problem lies in the design of this CD cover. Who the fuck did this? Obviously, it was designed by a professional. The CD makes good use of space and is very eye-catching and simple and stylish, but it is designed to the point of impracticality. On the cover it says "araki ikara." Very clever, right? So either the band's name is Araki Ikara, or the band's name is Araki, with the Ikara being just a mirror image of Araki, or the title of this CD is Ikara. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these possibilities is more correct than the others. And on the inside of the cover is the same thing, "arakiikara." Maybe I'm just dense, but this is so frustrating. And it's really too bad, because this is a good CD. I really like it. There are a few piano interludes, with slow melodic indie-style rock in between. It's really very good. The music is catchy and intoxicating, and the vocals mesh well, without drawing too much attention away from the melody. It seems the vocals are simply there to supplement the music, if that makes any sense, and I think this isn't done enough in music. Araki Ikara, or whatever the fuck, do a very good job with this. And so I'm willing to overlook the design thing and give this a very, very positive review. PM (Scene Police/Humboldtstr. 15/53115 Bonn/Germany)

AUORE RIEN • Telesthesia CD

4 tracks in 35 minutes. Later Radiohead is what first comes to mind. Mellow rock. I guess one could say alternative music if that's PC. There are some noisy sections mixed with some samples and even a bit of ambient sounds thrown in. No lyrics are included and there really is not much printed information included with the disc although the CD cover is nice quality. Actually, song titles is about all you get. Still, good material for the late night wind down while working on the computer. JG (SunSeaSky Productions/307 West Lake Dr./Random Lake, WI 53075)

AGAINST ME! • The Disco Before The Breakdown CDep

I think their *Reinventing Axel Rose* LP is fucking brilliant. I've had this acoustic tape of theirs in my car for years. Most of the time, Against Me! is just so fucking profound in their songwriting that you love it the more and more you listen to it. So the standards were high coming in. I have to say that I was not initially blown away by this record. In fact, I didn't even really appreciate it until I sat down and really read through the lyrics for these 3 new songs. While the lyrics have much of the same spirit as older songs, the sound of this record is much more than any of the semi-acoustic 7"s or even of the melodic full band on the LP. Against Me! brings a bigger hardcore sound and some quirky add-ons to these songs. One of them even has some horns! Still, even if they take a few listens to suck you in the way the old songs do, you have to respect a band that takes chances for the sake of new ideas. So much of what I (like many people) like about this band is their sincerity, the way they seem like one of your friends. I'm doing my best to enjoy this set of songs as much as I can, before they release that record on Fat Wreck Chords and all of my grand ideas about them start to be whittled away. Until then, I'll leave these three spinning in my stereo waiting for the day they click like all the others. LO (No Idea Records/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

ANFO • La Sangre De Latinoamerica Lucha Y Resiste 7"

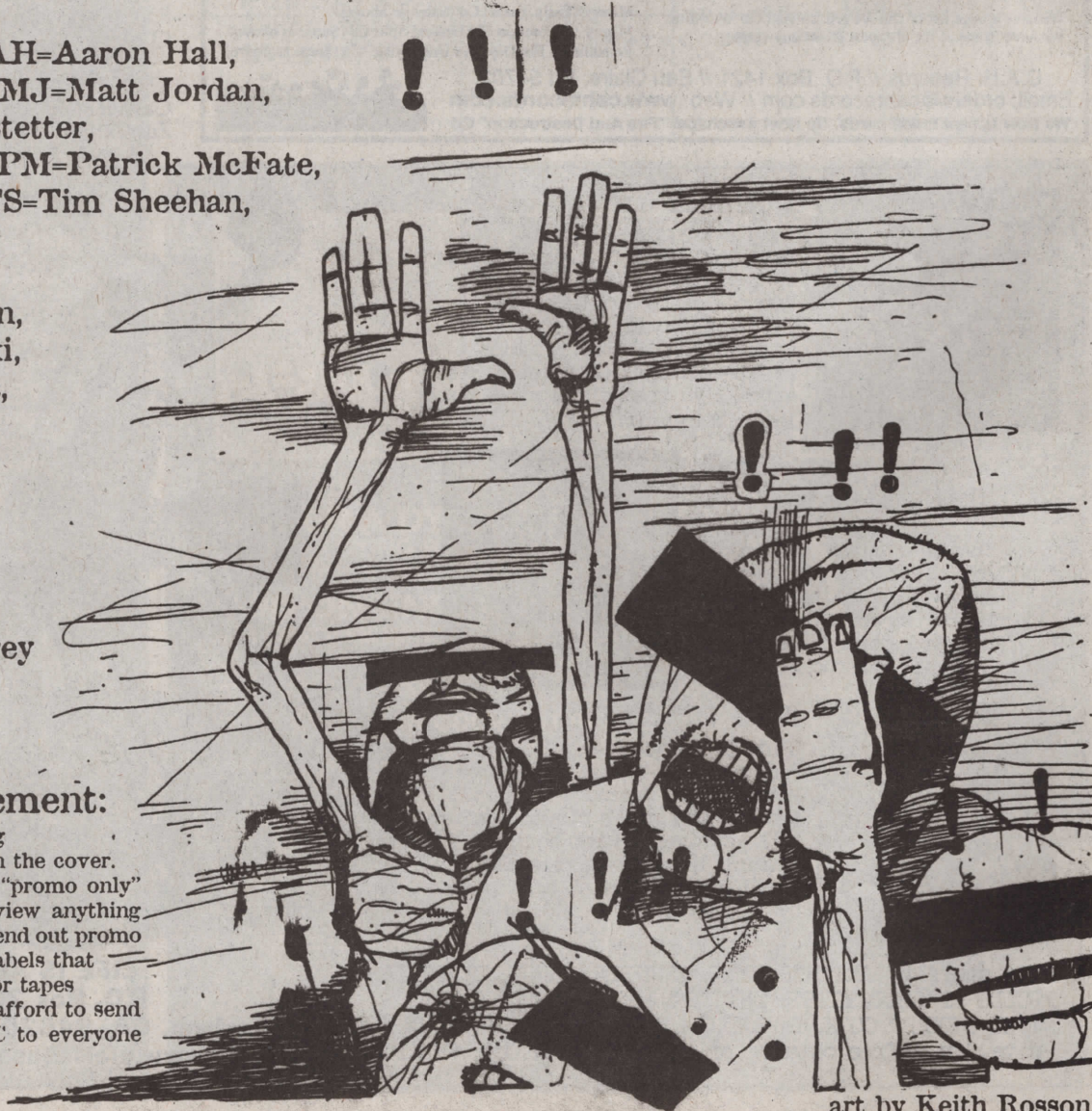
Anfo play HC political punk fury from Peru. Crust con D-beat para punks internacionales. Lyrics en español con traducciones en inglés para los gringos esta aquí en la USA. If you like bands from a place where they actually sing about problems that they face in life then check this out. Ragging and pissed off with a purpose, driving aggressive musica. No keremos ya mas mierda! CF (Effrenta Licentiae/423 All Saints St./Tallahassee, FL 32301)

Record Reviews

NW=Nate Wilson, AH=Aaron Hall,
CF=Chuck Franco, MJ=Matt Jordan,
MH=Marianne Hofstetter,
SJS=Steve Snyder, PM=Patrick McFate,
LO=Lisa Oglesby, TS=Tim Sheehan,
KM=Kent McClard,
MA=Matt Average,
CU=Christian Unsinn,
JG=John Gradowski,
EM=Erika Montoya,
DJ=Dave Johnson,
MAH=Mike Haley,
MM=Mark McCoy,
BH=Brett Hall,
FIL=Fil Baird,
MO=Mikey Ott,
and CD=Chris Duprey

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art by Keith Rosson

ASTRID OTO • CD

I love listening to Astrid Oto. They are totally fun and inspirational. It's great to have a collection of all their songs in one place. Astrid Oto is a pop punk band with all the harshness of an East Bay punk band of the '90s and all the character of the dirty south. Aaron Cometbus is in this band, and many of his other bands come to mind when you listen to this. Still, the most powerful element to Astrid Oto is the gritty, strained, and honest female vocals that attack every track. For this reason they have a distinct early punk feel, so Astrid Oto will always remind me of The Avengers. Pop and upbeat with a raw punk edge they will suck you in—and all the elements come together to create something sparkling. When I listen to this I just want to sing along and dance around my room in my underwear screaming the choruses. It is that good. LO (No Idea Records/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

AFTERLIFE • Enter The Dragon CD

Five songs. Wow, I have to say that, musically, this is absolutely great. Spanish posi core somewhere in between Atari, Carry On and later Turning Point. Nice crisp production, catchy guitar lines and raspy vocals. This has everything you'd want from a contemporary SXE release. Due to their limited knowledge of English the lyrics aren't always easy to figure out. Why not just sing in Spanish? As always with this genre, the songs are mostly about being disappointed by all sorts of people and trends. Considering that they call themselves "positive," straight edgers sure seem to feel down a lot. "All Stars," which deals with "hardcore super stars" who don't feel the need to keep in touch with the "lower life forms" (i.e. Southern European Posi Kids), manages to sound angry, needy and depressed all at the same time. "I've waited for your answer to my 1000 mails/For long hours I waited for you/Well, I guess you lost my number (...) 5 are the minutes we have shared this time/But it will be enough to remember you." Thus the sub genre of Straight Edge Stalker Songs is born. Why do you even care if some asshole writes back or not? And "1000 mails?" Really? Have some self respect, will you? Ironically, this CD ends with the lines "Shut the fuck up, and don't complain/It's time to fucking change." I couldn't have put it better myself. MH (Crucial Response/Kaisersfeld 98/46047 Oberhausen/Germany)

BANANAS • The First 10 Years CD

In this world of ten thousand six week long punk and hardcore bands, it's pretty amazing to see a band last an entire decade. But I can actually remember having a Banana's demo waay back in '94, so it is true. All the rest of the evidence is here on this disc: thirty-four songs of garage-y punk goodness. Sonically somewhere right in the middle between Nar and Los Huevos, the Bananas were (are?) a distinctly Sacramento phenomenon; and if you don't know what that sounds like, then I can't help you. The best thing about this band is an utter lack of complexity: no stilted attempts at being "original," no awkward liberal politics to cringe at, no fancy computer graphics, no bad poetry—just analog in the best spirit of the word. Something we need in this tragically complex world of today. TS (Plan-It-X-Records/5810 W Willis Rd/Georgetown, IN 47122; www.plan-it-x.com)

BATHTUB SHITTER • Fertilizer 7"

This is a repress of this EP. Totally intense and punishing fecal influenced grind from Japan. Super low vocals, high pitched ear piercing screams and heavy riffs that will blast right through your skull. This band has plenty of releases out for you to grab and they all rule. CF (First Blood Family/PO Box 1766/Madison, WI 53701)

BILLY DIRT CLUB • Live at Indica Haus CDR

Live boom box recording on a CDR. Who cares what it sounds like. MM (Volatile Rock/PO Box 200072/Anchorage, AK 99520)

THE BITTER LIFE TYPECAST • CD

Let me start by saying that the singer for this band sounds like the result of jamming Bono from U2 and the singer from the Cure into one body. The songs are slow and the guitars are jangly with echo effects added here and there. As you can imagine from the description so far the songs also meander along never really seeming to go anywhere. I'm sure this floats some people's boats, and for them it is definitely worth checking out, but it sank like a rock for me. BH (Outreach Records/121 Old Company Rd./Barto, PA 19504)

THE BLACK SEA • 10"

Low and intimate, these three songs try to snake their way under your skin. The Black Sea plays a mellow rock that attempts to be minimal in sound and monumental in affect. While it is quite controlled, it does not hit me the way it might someone more inclined to the sound. Still, "Ghost Lanterns" is a good one. The Black Sea features members of Fugazi and Frodus. LO (Day After Records/PO Box 153/As 35201/Czech Republic)

THE BLACKS • Last 7"

Only two songs here, but they remind me of some decent sounding hardcore that might come out in like 1982 from the Midwest. Rocking and cool. I'd like to hear more. NW (Chemical Valley Records/205 E Alturas/Tucson, AZ 85705)

BURN YOUR BRIDGES • CD

The powerhouse combo of Chris Dodge from Spazz and Bob from Lack Of Interest burns through twenty-three songs here. Burn Your Bridges plays straightforward hardcore with power violence and thrash influences. In each of the songs they throw in a good dose of melodic elements and thought provoking lyrics. Since the songs are only mid-tempo to fast, most of said lyrics are understandable... making it easy to sing along to the catchy parts. Burn Your Bridges stays true to the power violence genre these guys helped build. This is a solid release. LO (Deep Six Records/PO Box 6911/Burbank, CA 91510)

THE BLANK FIGHT • House Band Feud CD

So, I guess the story is that this band started when one punk house in Pensacola challenged other punk houses to a big house band feud. The other bands apparently never really got started, but the Blank Fight was able to record these fourteen songs and tour and I guess they were only around for like a month or something. Aaron Cometbus played drums and Rymodee from This Bike is a Pipe Bomb played guitar and harmonica, so if you're into either of their other bands then you should definitely check this out. It's part East Bay punk with the southern folk/punk influence. I think it's fucking great, the songs and the stories, I'm totally into it. Half of the songs have little music notes, too, so you can play along if you want. FIL (Plan-it-X/5810 W. Willis Rd./Georgetown, IN 47122)

THE BLUE HOUR • I've Filled Up These Pages CD

How come I always seem to get the worst emo out of the review box? If you like synth pop, indie rock, emo wank, then you might be able to review this more fairly. I only got this so I wouldn't be reviewing only stuff I like (insert fainting noise here). CD (Alone Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

BODIES IN THE GEARS OF THE APPARATUS • 3" CD

Three songs for three inches. Bodies In The Gears Of The Apparatus plays grindcore in the super fast and slugging tempos. Little explanation of the noise found here, as the little cover has barely more than their names. Instead, they maximize the idea that the sound is all you get. So you might as well focus in on it. The music comes in like a missile. The songs are frenzied and furious, with lots of punchy moments of vocal/noise unison. LO (bodiesinthegears@aol.com)

BOXING • Way Down East CD

This is really, really, really fucking good! Way Down East starts off with a 6 minute 53 second soft jam, complete with harmonica (aka: the way to my heart) and vocals that will appeal to fans of David Bowie, Neil Young, and Bob Dylan. I bet if Dylan's son wasn't such an asswad, he could pull this off, but he is. The longer this record plays, the more ground is spans. "Knitting Around" and "The Seething Original" have a garage, English atmosphere about them, while "State's Old Banner" and "Thievery & Girls" almost sound like lost Bright Eyes tracks. Boxing have the goods to pull off a country twang and a Pogues-esque jam with equal know how, and aren't afraid to rock songs out until they are a clutter of noise. This plays like a Wes Anderson soundtrack. Fucking get it! MAH (www.boxingtheband.com)

BREAD AND WATER • Everything So Far... CD

This collection of thirty songs shows off the merits of Bread And Water. I had no idea Bread And Water had so much stuff, but I guess the new LP on here has yet to come out. Usually, I really like this band. They play intense hardcore with a crust edge and tough female vocals. They songs about political and personal ideas I can identify with—and they remind me of the things I like about Nausea, early Kill The Man Who Questions, and Econochrist. Most of their songs are excellent. The sound is driving and edgy, as Bread And Water mixes melodic riffs in with full bore punk assault to. The aggression and energy is turned up to eleven on this one. LO (\$7 to PO Box 595264/Dallas, TX 75359)

BULLET TRAIN TO VEGAS • Profile This CD

More pop punk that is completely radio friendly, polished and over produced. This stuff sounds like complete crap. It might impress some 13 year old girl, but not this Joe. They should be sending this hunk of doggy doo to a major label. I hate music as much as Lisa must hate me for sending me yet another pile of crap that I found almost nothing redeeming in. Please Lisa, I beg of you to send me something I like. NW (Letterbomb Records/21661 Brookhurst St. #125/Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

BURY THE LIVING • Bathed In Blood And Climbing... 7"

I'm happy to start seeing the refreshing round of punk recording to the political climate in the US post 9-11. On this record, Bury The Living criticize the wave of patriotism, our willingness to go to war on smaller countries we don't know much about, and the basic gang-ho American attitude. All of this is done within the context of a strong hardcore sound. Their songs drive and crash with a serious fury, throwing in just enough change ups and melodies to keep it fresh. Bury The Living reminds me of Talk Is Poison in their sound and energy. This is a good record all around. LO (Kangaroo Records/Middenweg 13/1098 AA Amsterdam/The Netherlands)

BIG BOYS • Wreck Collection LPx2/CD

The original version of Wreck Collection was a great record featuring a gaggle of great tracks from the Big Boys. This new version is even better!! It features all the original out takes from the first version as well as fifteen extra tracks!! There are a few never before released tracks, but for the most part these are all out take versions, demo songs, and live tracks. I guarantee every Big Boys fan will have bought this already, and if you aren't already Big Boys experienced then I direct you to go straight to your local record store and check out some Big Boys. As much as I love this release I wouldn't recommend it to a Big Boys novice. The inexperienced should check out the two Big Boys collection CDs on Touch and Go Records, and then after being seduced by the simply amazing Big Boys assault then you will go out and get this one as well. The Big Boys combined hardcore and funk and rock and just about anything else that seemed to work to create one of the most creative, fun, and energetic hardcore bands that ever existed. These release comes with some great photos, art, and writings by or about the Big Boys. Simply awesome. Simply amazing. KM (Gern Blandsten Records/PO Box 356/River Edge, NJ 07661)

BULLDOG SPIRIT • CD

Well, I've been known to like some Oil, but this shit is simply not listenable, metallic influenced oil. The lyrics are exactly what you'd expect, though I notice they leave a few lyrics off of the insert. Hmm... nothing groundbreaking. They do a pretty good cover of AF's "Last Warning" though... I guess that's about all that I could really take. NW (Brutus Records/Via Stevani 5/29100 Piacenza/Italy)

THE C*NTS • La La La CD

Every year or so, we get another CD from this band. Apparently, The C*nts will never run out of inspiration. I will say that the progression from the last CD to this has been strong. La La La fills itself with more soulful tones and a strong amount of catchy rock riffs. Here they show off their ability to play garage rock with an emphasis on blues, surf, or punk depending on the mood. LO (Disturbing Records/3228 S Racine/Chicago, IL 60608)

CALIBOS • And the Days We Spent Go On and On CD

12 songs of dreamy indy rock that have an older punk feel to them. Like television or something. Kinda reminds me of Sonic Youth in the vocals. Not really my cup of tea, but I can see how the stuff could be appealing. NW (Handheld Records; www.calibos.com)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES • Disassembly Line CD

If you don't know who this band is, well I am sorry. This is a CD repress of the classic LP with extra tracks from the Art of Ballistics EP. The purveyors of power violence along with bands liked Crossed Out, etc... fast, personal and political lyrics. Thrash and hardcore riffs and pissed shouted vocals to boot. Will this band stand the test of time? I'm sure. How many kids do you still see around sporting CC patches, plenty enough... let the saga continue to unfold young hobbit. CF (Six Weeks/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotati, CA 94931)

CAST ASIDE • Overcome 7"

Cast Aside name a lot of tough sounding people in their thanks list, so I am sorta walking on eggshells describing this. I mean, I'm pretty weak, and I don't wanna get hurt... Fuck it, this record sucks. The first line in the first song is "Die You Motherfucker," so there is no mistaking the impenetrability and cheeziness of it all. Plenty of generic mosh parts and stuff about being straight edge "until the day I die." I am gonna do what the title tells me to, and cast this record aside ZING! MAH (www.malfunfunctionrecords.com)

CAST FROM EDEN • The Deafened Art of Bleeding... CD

Fuck, this is cool! I don't particularly like much of what Catalyst puts out, but Cast From Eden is definitely an exception. These guys play very well-controlled metal. At times this sounds like Converge, other times it resembles Slayer, and in the middle Cast From Eden puts in something all their own. Each song is thoughtfully put together with skill and style, making its listener pound air drums even on the first listen. And despite what my roommate says, I think the layout of the booklet is good. There's lots of blood on every page, in photographs of the band members and their girlfriends acting out the theme of each song, with scratches and schematics and numbers superimposed around the page. We've all seen it before but I like it anyway. This is heavy, punishing, fluid, sincere metal hardcore. If you like metal at all you should check this out. PM (Catalyst Records/PO Box 30241/Indianapolis, IN 46230)

CEMENTHEAD • February Girls CD

I hate this garbage, complete radio friendly pop that reeks of air time, and all those things we are supposed to be disgusted about. Sucky, sucky, sucky. NW (390 Hooper St. A4/Brooklyn, NY 11211)

CEREBRAL TURBULENCY • Impenetrable cassette

This cassette is a metal assault in twenty-six tracks. That would be an amazing treat for any metal fan; one who thinks there are subtle yet distinct differences in the songs that I hear as "just more metal." It does say something that the band can keep this intense style vibrant for all the songs. Cerebral Turbulency adds challenging and varied lyrics to this recording. They talk about human rights, drug legalization, pedophilia, work, prejudice, and painful inner turmoil. Most lyrics are printed in English and Czech. LO (Insane Society Records/PO Box 6/50101 Hradec Králové 2/Czech Republic)

CHAINSAB • No (Since 1991) CD

Here's a band that has existed as long as Dropdead and Capitalist Casualties... over ten years and still going strong. These guys play some very cool traditional hardcore punk. Eleven songs here, one is an interesting cover of an Anti-Nowhere League tune. Very cool mid paced catchy stuff, with vox that sound kinda like Roger From A.F. back in the day. I guess these songs are from various compilations and 7"s. A good start to catch on to a classic band. NW (Six Weeks Records/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotati, CA 94931)

CHAINSAB • Believe Only For Itself CD

Fat-guy fronted Japcore that's like a more predictable Gauze with the pit bull singer from Sheer Terror stroking the mic. With one of the most awful cover designs since the legendary No Royalties comp, this loses major points for the Sex Pistols-ransom note computer font/cauliflower imagery. MEH! Why can't any of us realize the Japanese really aren't weird and incomprehensible, they're just fucking with us! It's true, they know just as well as I do that stupid hardcore kids will buy anything if you stick the right tag on it: JAPAN! THRASH! CRAZY!! I can't help but to immediately dismiss this as one of those CDs that I can't ever see anyone needing. Speaking from experience, at least it's clear the good people at Six Weeks aren't signing bands based on any artistic merit. MM (Six Weeks/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotati, CA 94931)

CONFRONTO • A Insurreição CD

In these six songs, Confronto take on serious social and political problems. Their sharp articulation of the world's woes reminds me of Catharsis. (The sheer length of their liner notes shows their dedication to communication on these issues.) Musically, Confronto play precise metal-core. The sound is deep, penetrating, and unrelenting. It has a fierce tempo and even fiercer vocals. All that is painful and brooding seems to come out in these songs. LO (Cospe-Fogo Gravações/Rua Baturité, 267/CEP 01530-030/São Paulo-SP/Brazil)

CONGA FURY • Chaotic Noise CD

Ferocious ferret-in-a-rat-trap vocals rise this otherwise dud out of the heap of massively overrated drivel churning out of Japan these days. And while they couldn't write one memorable riff to save their lives, it's the overall product as a whole that presents Conga Fury with any lasting effectiveness: they are spastic and good humored, which is always a pleasant touch. However, in the typical hardcore tradition of late, it's traditionally traditional, and by that I mean good but nothing Fuck On The Beach hasn't already beaten to death a million times over. Plus it's not as fast as you'd hope, in fact it almost drags along without as much as a single tempo change that in this case, hurts them. Without their singer this would be as about as exciting as any recent release on Coalition Records. MM (Six Weeks/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotati, CA 94931)

CONVERGE • Unloved And Weeded Out CD

Since Caring And Killing which, arguably, was some time ago I have come to realize that I don't really care about Converge. There are just too many other punk projects going on for me to bother keeping up with a band furthering the metal-core genre, no matter how good they are. This CD has a bunch of new songs, songs from the demo, and then a couple live tracks. So it is pretty appropriate for someone so out of the Converge loop would get this for review; since it is such a sampling of what this band has to offer. Expect big and bold and powerful songs here. Converge weave complicated and bittersweet songs. They aren't really going to the obvious anymore, though a couple of the new songs go far the classic Converge sound. They will deliver the goods to their fans for sure with this release. The well-recorded live stuff sounds similar to most of their other ones; the only real difference is the speed and intensity at which they are delivered. LO (www.deathwishinc.com)

CHARM CITY SUICIDES • II CD

Charm City Suicides plays super basic and raw punk with an age old feel. The whole recording sounds like a badly dubbed tape, yet the spirit of the band transcends that hindrance. In the end, the thing that I like about this is the fact that it is stripped down and real. Listening to this CD, you feel like you are transported to the nasty basement the show is in (which is good). Anything this band is doing in terms of sound seems to be in direct opposition to what would be pretty music. Somehow all these negatives come together to create this fantastic thing that simultaneously sound sort of bad but really great. Case in point, the vocals, which are shitty but very fun. This is the kind of thing that punks like because we already know that we like it. We like the insanity, we feel a connection to the craziness. But when the non-punks hear it they wonder why we are listening to a tortured cat. On the surface, it sounds like something you couldn't possibly enjoy, but you do enjoy it because the craziness speaks to what you feel inside. Charm City Suicides don't sound like bands that are around right now, they sound like our collective past. Plus, the songs are just fun. LO (Baths Of Power/48 Glen Alpine Rd./Phoenix, AZ 21131)

CINDER • Que Te Parta Un Rayo 7"

Spanish kids rockin' out in a similar vein to Life's Halt and some of the other bands that have been "bringin' it back" competently in the last two or three years. Lots of sing-a-longs, wailing guitars, and snappy bass interludes. Lyrics against bigotry, right-wing politics, and police repression; for community, unity, and the pit. Good stuff, though perhaps not quite yet extraordinary; worth keeping an eye out for, though. TS (Sell Our Souls: www.selloursouls.tk; sosrecs@yahoo.es)

THE CRACKHEADS • Drunk 7"

Two songs that made me wince in pain. I guess this would be appealing if it was 1979 and there wasn't all to much else out there for me to listen too. 3 chord punk with no balls, no hooks, no nothing. NW (Dylaramma Records/3218 Fullerton Ave. Apt. 26/Chicago, IL 60647)

CRESS • Propaganda and Lies discography CD

D-beat political punk rock. If you are into this stuff, you're good to go. A great rockin' CD. JG (Flat Earth Records/145-149 Cardigan Road/Leeds/LS6 1LJ/UK)

CLAIRMEL • A Letter To Friends CD

A while back, before Hot Water Music just exploded into this thing that seems incomprehensible, Clairmel played the sort of emotional melodic hardcore that was indicative to Florida but not that well known. But then Hot Water Music gets ridiculous, and they sort of suck up all of the attention that might normally be spread out among the bands of the same underground genre. Clairmel is one of those bands. Pure heart and guts music that stays more punk, less conventional, and therefore less known. It has been a long time since Clairmel have released a record, so this recording spans a few years of recording as well as including some comp songs and the stuff from their split with Hot Water Music. Now everyone can get up to speed with this band in these 11 songs. If you are inclined to like Small Brown Bike or Hot Water Music, this is the kind of thing I would recommend for those of you looking for something a little rawer. No Idea has put out plenty of these bands people (outside of Florida) have probably forgotten—and most of them are good. Clairmel is certainly worth searching out. LO (No Idea Records/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

CITY OF LIARS • CD

City Of Liars plays four quick songs here. They toss out noisy hardcore with a tinge of metal and an equal tinge of screamo. The tempo moves from furious to meandering within each song, at times giving it a bluesy edge. Politically motivated lyrics add urgency to this set of songs. It is a nice, short set that would be good live. LO (www.fordocumentationonly.com)

CODE ORANGE • This Is What We Make It 7"

This is a really fresh and interesting little record. Arriving wrapped in a ponderously oversized hand-screened cardboard box, a piece of red vinyl containing four really well put together hardcore songs. I hear emo, indie-rock, crust, and metal elements at play here, but the end result is a solidly hardcore sound, much more original than any of its constituent influences. For points of reference, I would say that this reminds me of the things I like musically about The Great Clearing Off, and I can totally see Code Orange sharing the bill with their hometown contemporaries, Seven Days of Samsara, though I wouldn't say that CO actually sounds like either of those bands. The whole package is very DIY, though quite competently so, and the recording and mix are on the money. My only complaint is that the lyrics are fairly incomprehensible "personal" ramblings, but as usual, that's often less offensive than the poorly reasoned reformist claptrap that makes up the analysis of so many of today's political hardcore bands. A nice new band and label to keep an eye or two out for. TS (Noise Maker/4023 N Bartlett Ave/Shorewood, WI 53211)

THE COLOR OF VIOLENCE • CD

Very metallish hardcore, along the lines of Rorschach. At times I pick up a bit of a screamo influence also, there were bits were they sounded a lot like JR Ewing. Definitely worth checking out. BH (www.thecolorofviolence.com)

COMMON ENEMY • Outsider CD

A snotty punk coaster, fast-paced, and sort of like a much less poppy early Screaming Weasel, though lyrically not as complacent or petty. Lyrics for nihilism and skateboarding; against drugs, lies, school, religion, and, uh, kids being so enchanted with British punk they don't listen to North American bands, which I guess is a problem where these guys come from? This is fun and well-recorded, but not something I can really get behind musically. Maybe some of you will. TS (Justin/PO Box 138/Earville, PA 19519; www.commonenemy2000.com)

CONFIDANTE • 7"

This 7" sounds like a mix tape from 1997. Like a dub of a dub of a dub of the Reach Out 7". I think they spent too much dough on the sweet color vinyl, and forgot all about recording. Each member as a personal insert, which is good in theory, but Confidante try to be a bit to artsy. Especially Aaron Shlieve. Eh, that's kind of mean of me. Buy this record. MAH (conversations_with_confidante@hotmail.com)

CONTESSA • 7"

I keep having the weirdest fantasy that this is what Botch would sound like playing on tiny combo amps in some kid's garage in some tiny town. And perhaps that's the best description I have right now. It's not bad stuff, though I think it suffers a bit from seeming more like a project than a band, which I guess that's what this was. Straight from the liner notes: "This was done a number of years ago now back in the late 1998. Due to many strange reasons it has not seen the light of day until now. We were a bunch of guys who became good friends and had a lot of fun, playing music together more for ourselves than any other reason. We had to stop when Bubba moved away to get surgeries in another city. We have since become fathers, travelers, and a cripple." Dark and heavy, but maybe not in the ways one might expect. TS (Bubba/2070 Grant St Bsm/Vancouver, BC/V5L 2Z3/Canada)

COREY • Sacroniente CD

Very grindish thrash, with a fair amount of metal thrown in. Lots of blast beats and quite a few mosh parts also. The songs are tight, but there isn't really much of anything going on that differentiates them from any other metal thrash band. BH (Heroine Records/PO Box 35/47023 Cesena/Italy)

CRESTFALLEN • Streaks Of Terror LP

This is some heavy shit. They always kind of remind me of what Pg. 99 was like when they first started, especially the two singers. Now they have one of the kids from Pg. 99 playing bass for them. They play a kind of epic hardcore with melodic build ups and metal-influenced chugga-chugga mosh parts, mixed in with a few blast beats and other grind influences that come with the territory of growing up around bands like Enemy Soil. Although most of these kids are so you that it was probably Pig Destroyer by then. The songs are complex and moody and at times they are woven together seamlessly, maintaining an atmosphere through the whole record. They have a lot of energy and are a lot of fun to watch. One of the few bands like this that I can handle. FIL (Handstand Records/PO Box 16281/Alexandria, VA 22302)

CRISPUS ATTUCKS • Yo Pehol CD

This is a compilation of everything (I think) this band ever recorded. You get the 7" and the split with De Nada plus some other tracks. Fast and furious stuff. Their music has a much more brutal quality than other skate thrash bands. Oh, and there's a live video on this, too! The sound quality is so-so, but the images are great fun! I'd never seen these guys live but they appear to be kickin' it. Their bass player moves exactly like Martin from Crush My Calm which amused me to no end. He even wears the same trademark white shirt. Awesome! CA was one band with tons of energy and anger. They'll be missed! MH (Six Weeks Records/225 Lincoln Ave/Cotati, CA 94931)

CONSUME • Forked Tongue 7"

There are so many appealing things going on with record. First off, the lyrics are challenging, thoughtful, and even inspirational. Consume take a strong ecological stance, talk about the shitty human condition, and even tell you to cheer the fuck up. The music is harsh and fucking infectious. Tight guitar melodies, brutal distortion, and strong song structure make for an excellent 7". A lot of this record reminds me of the new Tragedy LP. Members of this band have been in State Of Fear, Shitlist, and Whorehouse Of Representatives. LO (Dissonant Sound Industries/PO Box 2353/Portland, OR 97208)

CURSED ONE • CD

The sound here is heavy and brutal. Cursed One is taking cues from metal hardcore but playing pretty close to the sound of From Ashes Rise. Their songs are harsh epics and the lyrics are winding prose. The all encompassing weight and grip of this recording can suck you in. I like this set of songs, but the long instrumental track was a little too much for my attention span. Hearing a band like this coming out of the Deathwish camp, it makes the idea that From Ashes Rise will make a jump from the DIY hardcore to the more professional metal scene after releasing that Jade Tree record pretty feasible. Cursed One put out a solid CD that fans of this sound will be into for sure. LO (www.deathwishinc.com)

DANCE DISASTER MOVEMENT • CD

This is fucking rad, dancy disco beats, '70s rock hardcore. It makes me want to move in a stylish way. This has a lot of cool elements come together for a good listen and an even better booty shakin. CD (Dim Mak Records/PO Box 348/Hollywood, CA 90078)

DARKNESS REMAINS • Lamia CD

For me, a definite metal CD and this is good for a change at times. Darkness Remains play the epic metal stuff. Vocals from the guttural stuff all the way to the screamo. Acoustic guitars, harmonies, it's all there. Demons, nightmares, the reaper, well you probably get it. Felt like I was back in high school again. Metal from the Eighties. JG (Tribunal Records/PO Box 49322/Greensboro, NC 27419)

DEADBODIESEVERYWHERE • Buy a Bullet, Rent... CD

Crushing grind. Good stuff for their last album. This CD contains five tracks of brutal music. I thought it was pretty good until I read on the case that the CD was enhanced for my computer. I threw it in my computer and viewed over ten of their songs live! Then I thought "this fuckin' cool!" The show is from January, 2000 and despite some sound distortion, the picture quality and video overall is great. A cool CD for grind fans. DJ (massgripnosis@hotmail.com)

DEAD BY DAWN • 7"

Dead By Dawn brings a heavy handed sound to this 7". It is distorted hardcore with a crisp metal guitar. A lot of the sick and thick elements remind me of Born Dead Icons. You absolutely have to listen to this record loud. Urgent political lyrics about 9-11, US arms sales, humanity's harm to the world, and the expanding global grip of capitalism show that Dead By Dawn has much to say. There are aspects of this record that appeal to me and other parts which get stagnant. I think the music is headed in a great direction, but it takes the occasional break in intensity that a band playing this style really has to have to knock me back. LO (\$4 to Born To Die/1904 NW 31 St./Oklahoma City, OK 73118)

DEATHBAG • 7"

Punchy and fast hardcore punk with social political lyrics, don't be fooled by the Discharge like logo. There isn't that much D-beating going on. I think this has more in common with bands like Tragedy or Talk Is Poison than anything else. I think that a better recording could do these guys some more justice. Not bad but not out right killer either. Nice cover of Raw Power's "Fuck Authority." CF (Get The Axe Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

DESTROY • discography CD

Destroy fucking rules. Pissed off, political with lyrics that matter. This is fucking crust, hardcore, punk thrash grind mayhem. This CD contains all the material recorded by this band, except for the demo. Anyway this rules my life and should rule yours. CD (Havoc Records/PO Box 8585/Minneapolis, MN 55408)

DIE EMPEROR DIE • mini CD

Okay... hold on... give me a minute... errr. (Ok, pull your self together, you can do this...). A first, I present two reviews in one! The objective review: Well I'm sure these guys are really nice and probably like to have a good time and hang out you know. Emo, no holds barred. Straight up. Young teen angst type stuff. They definitely put in a lot of effort into the packaging. Hand stitched case, was stamped and sealed envelope. Nice little explanations and some cute pictures of the dudes in the band hangin out. Songs that cry out I am and I need to be heard. I am a sixteen year old man and I have feelings too! Yes very emo. The other review: Please, please stop crying. Your trendy shag haired cute little heads and sweaters just aren't cutting it man. I think I feel an aneurysm coming on. CF (Kirk/1208 Idylwild/Houston, TX 77009)

DOUGLASS KINGS • 3 Bucks CD

The Douglas Kings have a really complete and full sound considering that the band only consists of two members; one on drums and one on guitar. The songs are very well written, catchy, and energetic with throaty singing that can vary in intensity. I am at a loss to compare the Douglass Kings to anything. Their sound is distinctly their own, with the main characteristic being the extremely memorable song writing. Just real catchy rockin' punk with no pretense. I like this band. There are five tracks on this CD. (Douglass Kings/PO Box 577909/Chicago, IL 60657)

DIRTY CHARLIE • 7"

Nine sloppy songs of upbeat and discordant (intentional?) female-fronted punk with vocals that walk the fence between being grating and genius. After perusing the lyrics about mundane life in New Orleans, I warmed up to Dirty Charlie like a sex-crazed minor with a stiff drink. Bless this band for maintaining their straightforward charm without ever coming across as petty and self-righteous. The weird ass cover art looks to've been done by some primitive swamp creature who flunked his silk screening class. A keeper! MM (Raw Sugar/PO Box 53011/New Orleans, LA 70153)

DISORDER • We're Still Here CD

Noisy, raw, balls out hardcore punk that is played by dudes who are as old as I am. The layout has the lyrics in both English and Japanese. Great d beat hardcore with wicked distorted vox, and reused discharge riffs. Classic. NW (H:G Fact/105 Nakano Shinbashi M/2-7-15 Yayoi-cho/Nakano 164-0013/Japan)

DISPENSING OF FALSE HALOS • With Prayers... CD

Dispensing of False Halos play hardcore with screaming vocals. This CD has enough different tempos and textures to make a totally involving listen. Lyrics are introspective and personal. A quiet beginning, which then builds, going straight into a power driving riff, and then back down again. Kind of difficult to sit still playing this one. Nice. JG (Init Records/PO Box 3432/Mankato, MN 56002)

DOGS OF IRE • CD

The first thing I thought when this CD started was Econochrist. The same melodic yet intense hardcore sound is happening here, even down to the drawled vocal style, one of the more unique aspects of Econochrist. But it doesn't come off as a clone, its more of a strong influence. Dogs of Ire tend to be a bit more on the melodic side, especially during the roughly sung vocal harmonies that pop up here and there. The lyrics and overall theme are political, without being heavy-handed. Overall this is good, there are some points where a bit too much intensity is sacrificed for melody though. BH (Ethospine/PO Box 1611/Riveside, CA 92502)

THE DUDOOS • Specium Sommer CD

The Dudoos bring some serious F-U-N with this CD. Fourteen tracks of upbeat poppy punk with a biting edge. Reminiscent of late seventies punk bands like The Ramones, The Dudoos play music that is both catchy and edgy. They mix in melodic and distorted guitars, catchy vocals, and little bits of keyboards to create this buzzing and grooving sound. I have no idea what any of their songs are about, since the lyrics (for each song) are a mix of Japanese, English, German, Italian, Finnish (?), and gibberish—but I like them. It's original stuff and rebellious fun for sure. LO (Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)

DURGA • Earn Your Red Wings, Mormon 7"

Every time I see a kid set up a keyboard at a show, I think a little part of me dies. I was hoping to be able to get past that, though, because I saw Durga play once, a couple years ago, and I remembered there being a little more to them than the average Nintendo-core bands. (My favorite part of that show, however, was when they were setting up and someone came into the kitchen yelling "It's a whole band of Mark McCoys!") They definitely fit in with bands like Locust and Usurp Synapse except that for once you don't need a secret decoder ring to understand the lyrics. So, if you are into that kind of stuff, you should get this, because at least they're not just talking about aliens and severed limbs and stupid shit like that. I totally appreciated the lyrics, explanations, female vocals, and their energy live. Some of these kids are also in other San Diego bands like An Arrow in Flight, Find Him and Kill Him, and the Plot to Blow up the Eiffel Tower (none of which have keyboards!). FIL (Transgalactic Ladder/PO Box 104/Wilmington, CA 90748)

EASTERN STAR • Bitter Ending CD

Eastern Star plays rock and roll hardcore. Their style is born from blues, influenced by down and dirty rock and roll, and played through the minds of punks. It is a sound symbolized by rolls of the dice, dagger tattoos, classic cars, devil's pitchforks, and girly silhouettes. *Bitter Ending* features ten songs with a strong sound and a raw edge. I would rather listen to them then, say, Hacksaw but I have such a hard time really taking this whole attitude seriously. Unless you're Mike Ness, I don't really buy it—and I even find the way he expresses *his* truth a little cheesy at times. LO (Hopewell Records/Ondrej Benes/U Hráze 1/100 00/Praha 10/Czech Republic)

ELEPHANTMAN • 7"

Thrashy hardcore with a hint of Rorschach and Sabbath. Some guy from Capitalist Casualties is on guitar. The recording is curiously low-fi and the band comes off as a not too terribly tight. At times their material can be quite exciting in a new school kind of way but then they immediately go back to the primeval metal thing. I don't know, for fans of Face Down In Shit and Neurosis this is probably well worth checking out. Lyrics are in Japanese, so I can't comment. MH (Impatience or Indifference/3201 3rd St. 2nd Floor/San Francisco, CA 94124)

ENDZWECK • We Are Not Pessimistic CD

Endzweck is a powerful hardcore band from Japan that plays emotional metal. A lot of their heavy sound is similar to Poison The Well, while the more melodic and emotional layering reminds me of Envy. Endzweck has a crisp and well-recorded sound with an original twist; so they'll appeal to any fan of the thick metal-hardcore genre. They have toured extensively and are gaining popularity in the Pacific Rim. Fitting to their style, they have a release coming out on Good Life soon. LO (GMC Records/SamRa Apt. 101-502/InChang-Dong480 Guri-Si/GyeongGi-Do/471-833/South Korea)

THE EUROPEAN TRANSLATION OF • Lights... CD

With the title, *Lights We Stole To Let Starts Sparkle*, do I even need to describe the music here? Yes, that's right, jangly and sweet indie rock with a highly melodic sound structure. The lyrics follow suit with descriptive poems, and short bursts of ideas about life. The European Translation Of does a masterful job of playing this genre. Fans of such will likely be lulled in by the romantic tones and softly humanistic expressions. LO (Millipede/Kohlflrterstr. 2/90473 Nürnberg/Germany)

FAZED • LP

Fazed is a strongly melodic hardcore band from with powerful female vocals all in German. Those are just a couple of the reasons I was fascinated by this record. The whole sound is very atmospheric and eerie, without the use of gimmicky noise machines. The intensity and fullness of this recording comes simply from the regular vocals-bass-guitar-drums assemblage. Fazed's sound festers and bubbles up between the cracks, then comes leaping forward in driving moments. The LP comes in a gatefold sleeve with lyrics in German and English. LO (Michael Stephan/Robplatz 10/99628 Buttstädt/Germany)

FED BY FICTION • These Lives Crash On Three CD

7 tracks. Ah, after the promising demo comes the first "real" release by this Wisconsin based band. Musically there's lots of stuff happening. I hear Pg.99, City of Caterpillars, Black Flag, Antischism, Ruaheda, Julia, Submission Hold and tons of other influences. Every song has parts that I absolutely love and then some that I don't care for too much. It ain't easy listening hardcore, I can tell you that much. Lots of boy/girl screaming, some singing and moshing, some grinding, and fiddling, you get it all. What I appreciated most about the demo was its fuckedupness as far as the overall sound went. Now with a clearer recording that aspect is gone and you start concentrating on what the people are actually playing. I don't want to knock this, but this band certainly hasn't reached its potential yet. Maybe they just need to figure out better what works and what doesn't. Lyrically, though, they're right on track. As with Bury Me Standing, it's a little frustrating to see a bunch of smart and dedicated people getting together and never being able to really ROCK. There's still time, though... MH (self released, me thinks: PO Box 260116/Madison, WI 53726-0116)

FIRE DOWN BELOW • G 7"

Yeah! Fire Down Below plays catchy, intricate hardcore with a scremo edge. Their sound reminds me of both The Assistant and Merel; though those are two distinct bands from different times. Fire Down Below fits well into the modern hardcore genre where complicated noise and frenzied vocals take a large role in the sound. This is a good sounding 7" with a lot of personal ideas to share. The handmade (and hand burned) sleeve must have taken ages. Another quality record from Ed Walters Records. LO (Ed Walters Records/2416 S Warnock St./Philadelphia, PA 19148)

FORCE FED GLASS • Fine Tuned Chaos Motherfuckers CD

This is a discography for this short lived chaotic hardcore band from the northeast. This is total fucking chaotic brutality running you over like a gigantic brutal boulder of... BRUTALOCITY. I really liked this band, they had a real original sound I thought. The booklet that comes with this is pretty annoying though. It has no lyrics and this fucking band biography that is supposed to be comical, but it just irritates me in the end. However, visually it's pretty nice with lots of live photos and flyers. AH (Electric Human Project/500 S Union St./Wilmington, DE 19805)

FORK KNIFE SPOON • Black Stork Attack 7"

Fork Knife Spoon... Hmm, ladel, vegetable peeler, chopstick, masher, spatula, pastry cutter—oh, sorry, I thought they were making a list. Odd names aside, Fork Knife Spoon are very serious. Their sound is a mix of heavy hardcore and tight metal. Fork Knife Spoon create strong walls of sound that they let crash down at times for extra effect. This record is full of heavily destructive distortion. Their lyrics come off as timely and smart, especially in their liner notes and requests for communication. Fork Knife Spoon delivers a lot more than I had expected. I almost feel bad for making fun of their name. LO (\$4 to Born To Die/1904 NW 31 St./Oklahoma City, OK 73118)

FORTUNATO • CD

4 songs. It's like Chamberlain crossed with The Rolling Stones and I'm not kidding. It's got a feel-good, melodic quality and it rocks, but it also has a garagey feel. Oh, and Cap'n Jazz—it has a lot of the old Cap'n going on! So, yeah, forget about the whole Chamberlain/Stones thing. That probably just confused you. Well played and recorded, this is neat. Nothing groundbreaking but good. MH (www.fortunatorocks.com)

FURY OF FIVE • Telling it Like it is! CD

Tough guy hardcore that kids in my hometown eat up. The music never really goes any further than a cheap open E mosh that any 15 year old kid could play. Double bass drums, and wanky solos plague this short CD. Shout outs like "bring it on" pop out at you, to give you a good giggle. Four songs that were released, I guess, on vinyl and a compilation. NW (Inner Rage Records/BP 425/75233 Paris Cedex 05/France)

THE FUTURES • Dirty Works 1997-2001 CD

When The Futures were out here on tour from Japan, their closest show was in this small town called Ojai; I wanted to be there as briefly as possible. Luckily, I got there just in time and Reagan SS and The Futures both played back to back in less time than any one other band. I fucking love short sets. This CD includes the material from two 7"s, a split 7", demo, and a few songs from comps. So it's basically all the older hard to find shit in one place. If you've never heard them before, they play thrash with rock and roll attitude and it's good. 25 songs in 31 minutes. FIL (Jerk Off Records/203, 1-15-20 Kishinosato Hagashi/Nishinari-Ku/557-0042 Osaka/Japan)

FACADE BURNED BLACK • Jenny CD

I had no idea these guys were even still together. The last I knew they did an LP on Cleanplate that was semi interesting. I remember them playing more grind oriented stuff. I guess these Virginia boys have turned in their grindy hardcore for a more moshy metallic approach. Seems like they've gone the Converge route. NW (Amendment Records/580 Nansemond Cres./Portsmouth, VA 23707)

GALVIN WILHELM MILLER QUARTET • CD

There are only three guys in this band, not four, pretty wild huh. Okay, I really like grind and metal, but this is the genre of grind I can not stand. It starts out sounding like Pig Destroyer a little, but then it gets all wacky. There are only 5 tracks, and this thing is over 25 minutes long. I'm sorry, but for me a grind band needs to tear yer head off with their rampaging brutality and bloodspilling larval insanity and then get out. None of this fucking jazz break down fusion, Frank Zappa shit. If you liked Parade Of The Lifeless, this group has one guy from that band. If it was all similar to the 1st song, I would be really into this, it just starts to get on my nerves after a while. They have a song called "Idiot Savant," I wonder if it's a tribute to the rad band from the Santa Barbara area of the same name, ha ha ha. AH (Impatience or Indifference/3201 3rd St., 2nd floor/San Francisco, CA 94124)

GHOSTS • CD

Here are four tracks of simple punk rock with the emphasis on rock. Ghosts play fast and loud dual guitar workouts and a driving rhythm section. The vocals are shouted and wear thin eventually. A high energy level is maintained throughout though a few tracks seem a bit to long. SIS (Ghosts/1200 Toltmie Ave./Victoria, BC/V8X 2H9/Canada)

GIANT HAYSTACKS • 7"

Riff nabbers! And who the hell isn't these days! The Jam and/or Gang of Four should be taking immediate legal action for this case of British post-punk thievery. Semi-spoken vocals and jangly clean guitar hammer out riffage so catchy you'd swear you were actually reading this review in *Vice Magazine* and Giant Haystacks were nothing more than a bunch of art school snobs from Williamsburg playing bar shows to sleazy bridge-and-tunnel groupies full of somas. Cheers! MM (PO Box 22971/Oakland, CA 94609)

GLASS CANDY • Love Love Love CD

Glass Candy is comprised of guitar, drums, and a very resonating female vocalist. Listening to this CD, I can't ignore the similarities to '70s punk and rock that created the underground we build off of today. The styles and trademarks of Blondie and Patti Smith come to mind for sure when I hear this. Glass Candy plays drippy arty music that is also new wave weirdness. The low tones in the music allow it to take a back seat to the powerful vocals. While this is interesting and at times enjoyable, Glass Candy's performance art style is just a little to far out there for me to really get all that engrossed. LO (Troubleman Unlimited/16 Willow St./Bayonne, NJ 07002)

GLASS CANDY • Love Love Love CD

The thing I really like about this band is that they have their own aesthetic, and it's an aesthetic that no one else in punk seems to be doing or at least I don't know if they are. It's this weird merging of cut and paste with Flash Gordon. I don't know exactly, but I like it. I have a few singles from Glass Candy, but I have to say I like the songs on this a lot better than anything I've heard so far. The songs are really raw and stripped down, some of the parts almost remind me of The Misfits, with the catchy guitar lines over drumming on the toms. Someone told me this was a good record to have sex too, which it is. I thought it was McClard who said that, but then I remembered, "Kent doesn't have sex..." Duh. MO (Troubleman Unlimited/16 Willow St./Bayonne, NJ 07002)

HABLAN POR LA ESPALDA • Le Petit Detail Qui... CD

Wow, this is really good! Hablan Por La Espalda are a five piece from Uruguay, and play what I think Song of Zarathustra would sound like if they started a garage rock band. They manage to blend chaotic screams, akin to SOZ and I Hate Myself, with raspy singing and gripping guitars. The fifth track offers an upbeat, almost surfy approach which is pulled off in a pretty fucking solid way. They even translate the lyrics for ignorant Americans like myself. If you are into The Panthers and (International) Noise Conspiracy, then you will be doing yourself a favor by picking this up. MAH (Sniffing/cc3288 (1000)/Buenos Aires/Argentina)

HEAD HITS CONCRETE • Hops, Fear and The Terror... 7"

First off, this records shreds. Screaming hardcore which at times has some musical complexity to it. Lyrics comment on war, Ritalin, and even minimum wage. This is the kind of shit that needs to be listened to loud. I like it. JG (Intolerant Messiah/PO Box 6162/San Mateo, CA 94403)

THE HORROR • First Blood 10"

Thrash laden Infest sounding pissed off hardcore. The Horror goes the route of playing fast power violence type HC. The singer's vocals are totally pissed and hoarse. The guy tells the truth, too. Maybe we are destined to burn. Everyone is an expert when it comes to other people's lives. Good stuff here. It's always nice when there's a gem in a pile of shit. CF (Chainsaw Safety Records/PO Box 260318/Bellerose NY 11426)

HEARTSCARVED • Epilogue CD

3 tracks from this now defunct band. If it weren't for the relentless doodling metal guitar this wouldn't be half bad. The vocals have a (relative) hardcore sound and the production is powerful. But, alas, the guitar noodling and the double bass drums make this metal, metal, metal. For fans of Cave In, maybe, or Iron Maiden. MH (PO Box 49322/Greensboro, NC 27419-1322)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE • *Patmos or Bust?* 7"

This is an amazing record. Bands need to drop the shitty songs they're wasting their time writing and listen to this fucking thing. It's way too furious and tight to be written off as some retro LA punk rip-off, and the early-Damned worship right down to the vocal melodies and smashing drum beats can even be dismissed as mere coincidence. This band trims the fat of cheeseball indulgence right off and issues forth four perfectly-composed beauties of punk anthems. This EP is a modern masterpiece. Stockholm's Henry Fiat's Open Sore has been around for years and only seems to continually blow doors. Fuck this place, I'm moving to Sweden! MM (Wrench Records/BCM Box 4049/London WCIN 3XX/England)

HOBART • *Sorry I Asked* CD

Heavy, slightly discordant, mid- to a little more than mid-tempo hardcore. Scream-y, distorted vocals. A few dashes of electronic noise here and there. Occasionally finds an enjoyable riff-driven groove. No lyrics. Bad name. If I didn't know better, I might be inclined to think this is the bar band Absinthe became after Brendan left for greener pastures. TS (Sumo Agnew/1031 E Grant Rd/Tucson, AZ 85719; www.geocities.com/hobartfromtucson)

I AM LEGEND • *Linking The Blood Mythologies* CD

I Am Legend play a very familiar metal hardcore. They give you crushing weight and driving tempos lined with the occasional soft riff or melodic breakdown. These time-tested techniques get used to the fullest here. I Am Legend play their stuff well and infuse a good amount of energy and passion into it. The despairing lyrics accompany the sound well. *Linking The Blood Mythologies* would offer a much different experience if only I hadn't heard this stuff a million times before... LO (Robot Winter Recordings/3520 Sunnydale St. NW/Cedar Rapids, IA 52405)

THE INFERTIL • *Dischoreography* CD

The Infertil are your basic little punk band. They play scruffy music with a lot of heart. The sounds are harsh and the band isn't really very tight. Still, they have a lot of energy and play a solidly poppy punk sound good for moshing, pogoing, or that head bob thing. Most of their lyrics are about things that bug them, but a few are meant to be funny as well. This is your neighborhood punk band of high school boys who have something to get off their chests. The Infertil discography has ten songs, though one is a cover and the other can just be thrown out all together. Most of the songs on *Dischoreography* are releases from 7"s or from their demo, thus the mumbo-jumbo title. LO (Handstand Records/PO Box 16281/Alexandria, VA 22302)

INOKENTIJS MARPLS • *Bitit Matos* 7"

Music this awful should immediately pose the most simplest of questions to even the least scrutinizing of ears: why bother? Could one's sense of judgement be so far off from another person's on this planet to the point of thinking Inokentij's Marpls is actually good? If anything, this band is a further reinforcement to music I never want to hear, and in my visions of self-grandeur I can proclaim it to the heaven's above that I AM RIGHT THAT THIS STINKS! Then sadly, at some point I'll remember that I actually don't know everything and more bad punk played by guys in their thirties who should know better will continue to plague this already overworked existence. Can anyone even name me one good band from Latvia? MM (Einers Poluskus/PO Box 606/Riga-50/Latvia)

THE INTIMA • *Peril & Panic* CD

Slick sounding post-punk mixed with Rainer Maria for an overall unpleasant thirty-nine minute bowel movement. Relentlessly frustrating arrangements never surrender and spare us no mercy to their undying display of torturous math rock and cello accompaniments. On a further note, the overcompensating drummer needs to take a fucking pill. Proving irrelevant virtuosity still doesn't detract from a listless zero-impact. For chumps who fancy Pagan folk hymns. A total disaster. MM (Slowdance Records/PO Box 30375/Portland, OR 97294)

IRON SAUSAGE • *I Toke & I Vote* 7"

The Rice of the weed smoker grind circuit. Blast beats and bass heavy rumblings spew forth beneath gutturalized political lyrics that ride out the sausage motif like a bad joke without a punch line. It's hard to figure out exactly which angle this band is coming from, let alone know who they expect to take them seriously. Who the hell cares! It's grindcore! Politics are secondary, and even theirs aren't mind blowing. Correct me if I'm wrong, but if The Meat Shits are still lingering these days, I'd say anything goes. MM (Deplorable; fullmetalkranksy@iprimus.com)

INHUMANE NATURE • *The Demonstration* 7"

Good mid-paced hardcore with screamed/sung vocals. Sounds and looks like it could have come out on Profane some years back. There's even a cover of a Born Against song. Cool stuff. JG (New Eden Records/PO Box 11055/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

JIIYUNA • *This Desolate Veil* CD

Jiyuna is a hardcore band that plays music influenced by the screamo and metal scenes. Their songs are intense movements of sound and emotion. With crushing guitars and heavy drums, all they need to add is their strained voices to complete this desolate feeling. Jiyuna's lyrics are intensely personal and fit well with the theme of the music. This recording is solid and I liked their handmade packaging. The CD comes in a screened cover, with a wooden CD tray, then adds a little insert pocket. You can tell a lot of thought and feeling went into this project. LO (4447/St. Claire Ave./Ft. Meyers, FL 33903)

JOE NINETY • *Blueprint for the Inevitable* CD

I'm actually a little embarrassed by how much I don't hate this CD. This straddles the fence between pop and hardcore, leaning distinctly toward the pop side. I'm at loss for references, though I can't quite shake the feeling it sounds *exactly* like some other band whose name I can't quite parse from all the music shit wasting space in my brain; maybe something from Chicago? Best I can offer right now is, "halfway between Lifetime and Piebald," though I'm sure that's inadequate for fans of this flavor; however, it does seem like it could appeal to as much to someone who loves the "Fat Wrecks" sound as much as a fan of Hot Water Music. Lyric-wise, Joe Ninety offers thoughtful verse that, while not overtly radical, comes off as vaguely socially conscious. Apparently even European pop-punk bands have a better analysis than 75% of US punk and hardcore; the sad state of affairs here in the States being that most kids seem more concerned with how beautiful they are than with producing something worthwhile to another human being. Five songs: four quite tuneful and enjoyable, and one I found rather awkward (number four, if the band is reading this). Besides the terrible name, exceptional for what it is. TS (Joe Ninety c/o Bombed Out Records/PO Box 17/Leeds/LS8 1UP/UK)

K LINE • *Lessons Learned But Ignored* CD

The five songs here come from two recording sessions about a year apart. The newer ones come first. K Line plays a poppy and fun rock sound with lots of melodic energy. The first three songs are more of the sweet indie rock genre, but the later two are rawer and have an excellent pop punk quality. I really enjoy poppy stuff when it has a raw edge, so it is no surprise that is my preference here. Something about the spirit of this band reminds me of Superchuck's *No Pocky For Kitty*. LO (Does Everyone Stare?/PO Box 35004/Edmonton, AB/T5K 2R8/Canada)

KÄRNVAPEN ATTACK • *Postnuclear Hardcore* CD

This band plays fast and thrashing punk. Each song bursts with energy from the beginning, but many of them lack the intensity to suck me in. Mostly, they play quick and harsh; which is certainly plenty for most punk fans. It's crazed pace and frenzied sound is reminiscent of the sound from many Finnish bands. Kärnapen Attack comes from Spain and sings all in Spanish. They have a nice booklet (which folds out to a poster) with translations of their message into French and English as well. The lyrics are highly political and bring up some good points of discussion. In particular, the song about the AIDS myth had me web searching to find out more. LO (Mala Raza/AP/CO. 6037-50080/Zaragoza/Spain)

KATASTROPHOBIA • *Homo Morticinus* 7"

Totally deluxe packaging. Sleeve folds out into a huge cross with skeletal fetus and the like. Also included is a nice size separate book with lyrics. And in this is also included song explanations, almost like a translation of each track. Songs deal with the problems of society and the issues of war. Music is trash with thick vocals and at times the music almost gets a metal feel to it. A powerful record which also brings to light problems this world has now. JG (Morningstar/Boerderijstraat 35/9000 Fent/Belgium)

KNOW YOUR ENEMY • CD

God I hate to say this, but it's another Chain of Strength clone band, even down to the guitar chugs and backing vox. The drum breaks are even almost exact. I guess this is part of all the Carry On, Coalition, Holding On straightedge scene that's happening today. I can't see it being of too much interest to people. I mean, I'd just tell those interested to go buy the Chain of Strength discography CD. Yawn.... NW (Crucial Response Records/Kaisersfeld 98/46047 Oberhausen/Germany)

KERVORKIAN • *Relief Through Scream* CD

The new Kervorkian is filled with so much dark metal-core it will make your head spin. Plus, they have those descriptively creepy lyrics whose meaning you can't quite figure. In a way that is supposed to be arty and elusive, but for the most part it just makes them easy for this reviewer to pass over. Were I a true fan of Kervorkian, I would wish they included some kind of liner note. Ah well. These songs are tough to the core. Kervorkian layers droning heavy guitars, thick vocals, and punishing drums on every track. Like Converge or Botch, Kervorkian play metal style hardcore with a sense of melody and strict songs; each one of these ditties is there own. They make a great effort to keep this tried and (often) tired style interesting as possible. LO (Hopewell Records/Ondrej Benes/U Hráze 1/100 00/Praha 10/Czech Republic)

LANDMINE SPRING • *Sip Of Wine Sip Of My Blood* LP

Landmine Spring unleashes a long LP full of indie rock hooks and moving melodic hardcore. The sound is so polished and distinguished you could almost call it post hardcore. There are a lot of current Dischord-style elements happening here. Long droning pieces that remind me of Lungfish, catchy vocals and guitars that sound like Bluetip, and some melodic elements definitely influenced by Fugazi. Landmine Spring has released a well-constructed LP full of edges to fall in and waves to bring you up. The sound is modern, mature, and meaningful. LO (Day After Records/PO Box 153/As 35201/Czech Republic)

THE LAST DAY NO HUMAN VOICE • CD

While most metal heads are addicted to crank, The Last Day No Human Voice seem to have a dependency on samples. I have never heard a metal album with so many! These long hairs pummel out thirteen deformed and disturbed tracks with the stench of mortal sin caked on thick. The CD, which goes on for over an hour, has hints of Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Pig Destroyer, and Today Is The Day, which is not surprising, considering it was recorded by Steve Austin. Every song has at least one sample either before, after, or during it, which gets kind of old, but I wouldn't tell them that to their faces. By looking at their pictures inside the cover, I bet they have killed people for less. If you are into out of hand metal, then you will dig this. MAH (H/G Fact/105 Nakano Shinbashi-M/2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho/Nakano Ku/Tokyo, 164-0013/Japan)

LIGHTNING BOLT • *Wonderful Rainbow* CD

With a name like "Lightning Bolt," one might expect a heaping serving of testosterone-driven thrash metal, but that is most definitely not what is contained in the digital etchings of this little disc. Sometimes sludge-y, sometimes light and noodle-y, and sometimes both, Lightning Bolt is an eclectic semi-instrumental two-piece mess of persistent noise. Perhaps an apt analogy would state that LB is to arty hardcore what Sun Ra was to jazz? I speculate that this will appeal as much to fans of Black Dice as those of Man Is The Bastard. The insert art is as much an eyesore as the music is an ear-sore, and thus as far as I can tell, there is no real lyric sheet to speak of. In this case that may be just as well. TS (Load Records/PO Box 35/Providence, RI 02901; www.loadrecords.com)

LOGAN • *Love, Said Gas* CD

This is hard to describe. It is sort of like the indie rock version of The Dillinger Escape Plan. The guitar parts are calculated and technical, but unlike Dillinger, they are very very unbrutal. Sorta like the antithesis of Dillinger. Maybe they aren't like them at all. Mike Patton isn't even in the band. MAH (www.psychoticarecords.com)

LOVE SONGS • CD

25 tracks. It's a couple of guys screwing around in a garage with instruments and recording material. I'm not sure if that's really true, because this sounds much better than the vast majorities of demos I've ever heard. It even sounds better than some of the "regular" releases I've had to review for this issue. That aside, I do believe that this is a project purely for fun. It's that poppy, punky, squeaky vocals kind of music. The only band I can think to compare to is the Dead Milkmen, though, I'm not sure that's a fair comparison... There's plenty of songs here about girls that broke up with them or about nothing much at all. It's all very sweet-natured, there isn't a mean note anywhere on this CD. I've heard loads of "serious" releases with lyrics much, much dumber than this and even worse song-writing. My favorite track is "Why did she have to break up with me?" which is just crazed, angry drumming and a guy screaming of his misery. Sample lyric: "Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuuuuuuuuuu!!! And I cut myself! Shit!!!!" I don't know, I guess you'd have to hear it. I enjoyed this. MH (New Disorder/115 Bartlett St./San Francisco, CA 94110)



MACH TIVER • CD

Mach Tiver is a two piece that plays biting, kicking, and screaming emo hardcore that takes you back about ten years. Their songs are passionate and raw; each note seems to be ripped from their chests. Mach Tiver speaks of personal issues and ideas that effect us as a whole in their songs. This CD comes in a nice looking cardboard jacket with hand stitching connecting a patch to the outside. Every bit of this is DIY punk. LO (Goodwin Centre For Audio Design/149 English Settlement Rd./Trenton, ON/K8V 5P7/Canada)

MAKARA • Discography CD

As atrocious and played-out as the "screamo" genre is, one can't say that it isn't popular. Witness the discography CD of a band that broke up in early '98, drawing only a marginal following at the time, and only releasing one comp track, two seven-inches and one side of a ten-inch (with the much more interesting Shahrazad) in two whole years of existence. Makara were interesting enough the first few times I saw them live, but recorded there's little here to hold my attention. The mix, especially on the early tracks, is dominated by the drums, everything else reduced to little more than white noise in the background; like most other bands of this type, song-writing is eschewed in favor of the cultivation of a "sound." To paraphrase something Kent once said about Makara, good drumming cannot carry an entire band. Granted, Makara was one of the West Coast fore-runners of this sound, and did feature ex-members of Mohinder, but ultimately there's just not that much to remember, and even less reason to try to recall. TS (Carmen Diablo/Jonathan B./apdc 13.036/46080 Valencia/Spain)

MAN VS NATURE • White One With Doctor LP

Well, I couldn't listen to the first song since somebody or something had scratched the hell out of it. Now that I've heard the rest of this record I'm not so upset anymore. I'm sure some people will find this interesting and inspiring—I just think it's headache-inducing, anal retentive jazz. It's the kind of "music" that turns old, laid-back little Marianne into one unhappy, majorly pissed mother. I suddenly find myself fantasizing about taking a baseball bat to these musicians' heads. Man Vs Nature alright. All my basic instincts rush right to the surface when the needle hits the vinyl. I'm thinking about sending them a turd in a box as payback for this waste of time and material. But they'd probably like that. Wankers. MH (Klistier Entertainment; www.msvn.com)

MAN WITHOUT PLAN • Futility Metamorphosis CD

At times off key and quirky, Man Without Plan's strength lies in the very human feel it gives off. Sometimes, the vocals and lyrical style remind me of Hellbender. Though the parts which stray away from pop-dom and move into the crazed, fast hardcore style make that comparison somewhat insignificant. Rather, I would liken Man Without Plan more to a contemporary band like The Insurgent, a band that uses harshness and sweetness together in a very raw and real way. LO (Ass Card Records/Fritz Piontek/Annentr. 5/44137 Dortmund/Germany)

MANDOWN • Quicker Than Poison 7"

Instant bonus for the singer wearing a Swiz shirt on the cover! What they should do now is find the guy who recorded this and kick his ass for giving them the thinnest fucking guitar sound ever. Did they really only record one guitar track? It sure sounds like it... Weird. I think this could have been a pretty powerful record from a cool new band, but due to the dismal recording it never gets off the ground. That's too bad. The vocals are pissed off and growly in a Negative Approach kind of way and the lyrics are positive without resorting to posi clichés even once. Better luck next time. In the meantime, go and kick that guy's ass. I'm not kidding! Kick his ass!!! MH (Capsule Records/PO Box 1861/Belleville, MI 48112)

MAROON • Antagonist CD

Another release for Catalyst Records here. I had never heard of Maroon before, (sXe hardcore not really being my thing) but apparently they've been around for awhile, so maybe you've heard of them. If not, I can tell you that Maroon plays heavy hardcore, very vegan, very sXe, in a very new school (but fast) way. One thing that is keeping me from really liking this is their many references to God and judgement day. I believe this is NOT used metaphorically. Almost every song talks about punishment for sins against nature. I just don't know. Hey, homies, I'm a lover, not a fighter. PM (Catalyst Records/PO Box 30241/Indianapolis, IN 46230)

MERZBOW • Frog double CD

Wow, two CDs of noise. Five tracks each, which gives you a good idea of the song length. There was an LP from Merzbow with the same title. This CD includes that material, and an additional CD of remixes and CD-Rom video excitement. I couldn't get it to work, but there is supposedly a screensaver on here as well. The first CD begins with some grating white noise and distortion, followed by squishy underwater blips and laser sounds. While it has screeching tones and frog sounds throughout, it doesn't strike me as all that deconstructed. Especially the looping last track that mostly sounds like someone is doing some woodworking next door. Disc 2, however, is complete destruction. Way more white noise and way more tweaking. It is so active and intense, it really tests your metal. A lesser reviewer would have just turned it off for sure. This is active noise. It will not be ignored, even when played at a low volume. Wild stuff. LO (www.misanthropicagenda.com)

MARA'AKATE • LP

Sort of an emo indie he metal mix. Can't say I enjoyed it, a bit too much going on for me, but the songs are technical, and they are played tight. One thing that sucks is that there is the same thing on both sides. Why didn't you make a split or just a 7"? Seems like a waste to me. CD (Alone Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

MACHINE GUN PETE AND THE AMMUNITION

• The Rawness Of Truth 7"

If this was one of those Mark McCoy joke bands, then MAYBE people would like it. But I think they take this seriously, and that's sad, MAH (no address)

MALROLLOSNOTA • Un Prototipo De Ser Amable... CD

Five shirtless dudes that combine hardcore and energetic punk with a so-so sum. They aren't bad at what they do, but I am not really a fan. It would not come as a surprise to me if this was released on Fat Wreck Chords, or something like that. Lagwagaon and 88 Fingers Louie come to mind when listening to this, so if you're into that stuff, check this out. MAH (Mala Raza/AP CO 6037/50080 Zaragoza/Spain)

MILKMAN • Is This Punk Enough For You? CD

I don't know what they put in the water in Holland, but it must be some kind of steroid. Everyone in that country can play such fast music... it's almost creepy. Do they teach Larm riffs in the schools or something? Milkman plays blistering hardcore with serious thrash in every song. It is relentless, it is furious, and it is tight. This is the old school European thrash that does not disappoint. Sure, some of the songs are a little wacky—but if you are looking to get pummeled, the Milkman CD is for you. LO (Kangaroo Records/Middenweg 13/1098 AA Amsterdam/The Netherlands)

MISERY SIGNALS • CD

Killer straight up hardcore with mosh breakdown sections. Screamed and spoken vocals about personal issues. The songs are not only totally hard driving, but also include some nice melodies. This always makes for a involving listen being that you never get bored. JG (State of the Art Recordings/PO Box 11876/Milwaukee, WI 53211)

MØLLER PLESSET • Rather Drunk Than Quantum CD

While Møller Plesset uses some original layers and effects in their songs, I'm afraid that is as far as I can go in terms of really appreciating them. I found their sound to be flippant and arty post hardcore that just got to be annoying to me. Their driving emotive indie rock rhythms seemed full of pretense. The vocals disguised under layered effects and highly present music just got to be too much. I was happy to turn this off once it was done. LO (K Fuel Records/27, Rue De Bellevue/35700 Rennes/France)

MORE BAD NEWS • 7"

This is a very good record, it has a real raw dirty sound. It sounds like a mixture of styles, all of them being brutal to some extent. I don't know man, I'm getting tired. If you like noisy dark sounding hardcore with high pitched raspy screaming, it has a big booklet, blah, blah, blah. If you need a genre classification how about arse ripping skullcrushing hardcore mayhem from HADEEEEEES. Oh no, wait, not Hades, I meant the CZECH REPUBLIC!!!!!! AH (Martin Koubek/Tvrého 28/60200 Brno/Czech Republic)

MUNICIPAL WASTE • Waste 'Em All CD

16 tracks. I hope this kind of artwork won't be making a comeback too soon. It looks like Suicidal Tendencies crossed with Iron Maiden. The songs here are fast and thrashy and somewhat reminiscent of the what Suicidal Tendencies did on their first album. It's all angry and tight. But to me this kind of stuff gets too tired too quickly, especially on CD. I just don't get the right vibe from this. If this had been a 7" then maybe... The lyrics are mostly humorous which is fine, though, again, I didn't connect. Check this out if you're into skate thrash and make up your own mind. MH (Six Weeks Records/225 Lincoln Ave/Cotati, CA 94931)

NO VIOLENCE CONSENSUS • CD

No Violence Consensus plays a furious mix of Refused style political hardcore and intense metal hardcore. The sound bashes and grinds with a raw energy and uncontrollable spirit. The lyrics for these songs are highly political and burning with dialogue. Each set is printed in Portuguese and English, along with a long section of afterthoughts and additional ideas. They take on issues specific to Brazil, as well as many international issues. LO (Cospe-Fogo Gravações/Rua Batúriti, 267/CEP 01530-030/São Paulo-SP/Brazil)

NUMBERS • Ee-uh! CD

Numbers is a band that plays electronic punk with a funk edge. Some of what they do can sound like Melt Banana, Le Tigre, or Men's Recovery Project depending on where they take it. Every song this band makes seems to mostly there to accompany the squeaks, blips, and computerized beeps that come out of the keyboard. It is a really, pointed, super robotic kind of funk. Now I understand why the monkey on the cover is wearing those thin new wave sunglasses. Some of this is recorded live from a show now dubbed "that eviction party" because people got real crazy and sort of wrecked the person's house. You just sort of assume that Numbers have a point, but you don't know what the point is and they don't really explain. Ee-uh! LO (Troubleman Unlimited/16 Willow St./Bayonne, NJ 07002)

THE NOW DENIAL • Truth Is On Fire LP

Fresh from their split 7" release with Seein' Red, The Now Denial offer up fourteen new tracks of hard hitting hardcore. The record came with a Scorched Earth Policy catalog, and the catalog compares them to Tragedy, From Ashes Rise, and Poison Idea. I don't normally agree with the comparisons that labels make about their bands, but this time it isn't far from the truth (I have seen hundreds and hundreds of bands compared to Black Flag or Born Against when the only similarities I can hear are that they all use drums, guitars, bass, and vocals). The Now Denial's songs are dark and heavy with harsh vocals, and an underbelly of melody that is deceptively buried under the more up front harshness. Good stuff. KM (Scorched Earth Policy/Irisstrasse 19/67067 Ludwigshafen/Germany)

NUEVA ETICA • La Venganza delos Justos CD

This to me is a perfect example of how shit like Earth Crisis has helped to destroy a subculture that started off with some decent ideas. Fuck all this over produced metallic mosh "hardcore." It has nothing to do with any scene that I belong to. If any thing it's a good reason for me to be embarrassed of the over use of a word like "hardcore." Fuck off... and get a clue. I don't care if they are from Argentina, this shit sucks hard. NW (Firme y Alerta Discos/CC 1817/Correo Central (1000)/Buenos Aires/Argentina)

NEON HUNK • Smarmy Mob CD

Neon Hunk is a noise outfit that orbits around whatever electronic sounds you can create with a synthesizer and drums. This two-piece brings you relentless scratches, bleeps, riffs, beats, and other things that sound like toy lasers. The art on here is a freaky mix of rainbows, cartoons, and fluffy cats into infinity. It is very odd indeed. With song titles like "Nuggles," "Meowus," "Port Ugly," And "My Unicorn: My Ride" the freakiness doesn't really cease. After seventeen tracks, you sort of wish they would. Neon Hunk: a Godstomper for the white belts. LO (Load Records/PO Box 35/Providence, RI 02901)

OBSCURITIES • CD

Mostly noise. This is a collaboration of three different groups: Mike Meanstreetz, Chad vs SUV Patriot, Gimme Cum, and LA Dice. The first three are noise, some samples of live music, some video samples, etc. The last is straightforward grind core. Neither genres are ones that hold particular interest for me but if you're into noise you might want to check this out. The four grindcore songs seem pretty run of the mill so they might not be enough to interest the grindcore fanatic. BH (\$5 to Mike Meanstreetz/370 Alta Vista Ave./S Pasadena, CA 91030)

ODDBALLS • Shit Explosion CD

Twenty-two songs by these guys. Sounds very Sympathy for the Record Industrious to me. I'd say that Billy Childish is a huge influence on these guys. Not my thing. Not punk to me, wimpy garage stuff that does nothing for me. NW (Scene Police Records/Humboldtstr. 15/53115 Bonn/Germany)

THE OLIVER TWIST BAND • New Tricks and Traps LP

After the first track, noticed I had been playing at the wrong speed. Switching to 45 solved that and things locked in. This was a totally different listen and I could not think of any influences off the top of my head. Noisy, high energy punk with crazy drumming and a lot of non-regular instruments, namely keyboards, included. In fact some, lounge jazz found it's way in on spots which made it really different and original. Never seen these guys live, but I'm guessing their shows are pretty crazy. Good stuff. JG (X-Mist Records/PO Box 1545/72195 Nagold/Germany)

OLIVER TWIST • New Tricks And Traps LP

This is the 3rd album by Oliver Twist from Cologne, Germany! I really liked their first two albums, so I was really looking forward to hearing this LP. Oliver Twist used to sound a lot like Chisel, and they were really real good. There are eight new songs on this piece of wax, and they are all way too artsy fartsy for me. Think of bands like Les Savy Fav and Lifter Puller, and you have an idea of what Oliver Twist sound like these days. X-Mist is a cool label that deserves your support, and if you are into the bands that I just mentioned, then make sure to check this out. I guess Oliver Twist are great at what they do, it's just that their new style doesn't do anything for me. CU (X-Mist Records/PO Box 1545/72195 Nagold/Germany)

ONE STEP SHIFT • Chemical Burn 7"

This two song record doesn't do much for me. Its melodic, but agro at the same time. The instrumentation is pretty sweet, but as soon as the vocals come in I get bored. If you do pick up this record, play it at 33rpm, cause its pretty trippy. MAH (www.loderbrock.com)

ONLY WAY OUT • 7"

This record sorta surprised me, as these guys look like the sort of guys that used to chase me around school for being a weirdo. Varsity jackets, and very clean looking gents sponsor the cover of this generic youth crew looking record. This is Polish straight edge that's played at a ripping speed and is still raw and hasn't been overproduced yet. Ten songs that are mostly sung in their native tongue. This I think makes it sound good. I guess Lisa and Leslie must think I've still got the edge, as they've sent me all the drug-free stuff to review this month. I recommend this record for this type of stuff, it seems to stand out from the rest. Not completely lost in the sea of Carry On styled hardcore... NW (Refuse Records/PO Box 7/02792 Warszawa 78/Poland)

OPETH • Still Day Beneath The Sun 7"

Judging from the cover, I thought I was getting a band that did Black Sabbath influenced songs. What I got was Gothic music. Probably appeals to some folks, but it's just not my thing. JG (www.music-for-nations.co.uk)

PLAN OF ATTACK • 7"

Plan of Attack truly believes their self-therapeutic display of "f" word-laced youth crew metal offers anyone the least bit of useful advice. Complain, complain, complain! Luckily for them, I got all the answers they need for the irritatingly routine gripes they pose: Don't like your home town? Move to the suburbs! Girlfriend giving you headaches? Rent a porno! Sick of lies? Go to church! E-mail me and I'll give you directions to anywhere you need. I used to live in Illinois, I got that whole shitty state mapped out on the back of my middle finger. In my experience, Plan of Attack, expecting the world to bend to your woes will only bury you in more boring record releases. MM (The Silent Architect/1664 N Vine #107/Chicago, IL 60614)

PAPER DOLL • Sink Or Swim CD

Five sweet, melodic rockers fill this CD. Paper Doll have simple and sugary creations that satisfy your sweet tooth. Much like Tiger Trap, Paper Doll will sweep you up in lullabies and odes to tangled relationships. They capture a certain something that the riot grrl in your can't ignore. Their vibe gets right to the heart of it, it is quite honest. I like that about them. LO (Roseward Records/PO Box 30/Riverdale, MD 20738)

PELVIS WESLEY • Oh My Goodness, How We Rock! CD

Pelvis Wesley plays fast and bumpy punk rock with both garage and pop influences. Their songs are gritty and edgy, sometimes bordering on irritating, but always catchy. I like the irrelevant lyrics and pure fun that jumps off this recording. One can only imagine the costumes, sweaty freaks, and out of tune guitars that come along with their live show. This is the kind of thing that can sound sort of bad and still be really good. LO (\$3 to Keith Rosson/2410 SE Taylor/Portland, OR 97214)

PETROGRAD • Nineoneone LP

Wow! This is really great melodic hardcore. Reminiscent of some of my old time favorites like Seven Sioux and Muff Potter. Catchy melodies, great male/female singing and bang-on lyrics about what's wrong with this world. I don't quite understand how I could have been overlooking this band. I must be an idiot. Granted at times this has an almost "rock" sound, but rest assured that Petrograd's head and heart belong to the underground and not to MTV. I think Leslie would love this band. It's total feel-good singalong stuff and I mean that in a genuine, positive way. Recommended to anyone who looks intelligent lyrics and melodic music. MH (Skuld Releases/Malmsheimerstrasse 14/71272 Renningen/Germany)

PHOENIX ARS • Teen Movie Soundtrack CD

This CD began with a minimal tune on the theme of love, which led me to assume there would be a similar One AM Radio-style sound throughout. However, Phoenix Ars mixes it up a bit with new wave synth-pop played slow and mellow. The whole thing is very affected and a good amount of it reminds me of Soft Cell (especially on "Enter Twilight"). Anyway, the songs on here capture the sultry combination of the two styles well. After these nine tracks, you get a good idea of what this band is giving out. LO (jonnyvuv@aol.com)

PIGNATION • Devastating Life Scheme CDep

Even though there are seven songs on here, Pignation blazes through them so quickly that this really is a CDep. The music here is unrelenting power violence. Pignation comes out strong, goes straight for the throat, and then they fucking cut it. Tight drums, precise guitar work, and tough vocals make for all out war on your ears. Plus, the CD is filled with these hilarious sound bites about the history and usage of the word "fuck." They break the songs up and make each song stand out on its own more. Often, music like this just sounds like a mish-mash of songs because they are short and similar. Pignation avoids that trap with all the fucking commentary. LO (Deep Six Records/PO Box 6911/Burbank, CA 91510)

THE PINE • CD

I don't know why my friends and I ended up in Bakersfield a few weeks ago. But regardless it was just as bizarre as ever. The same kid who for some reason bought us free drinks all night also at one point held a knife to my throat while telling me he'd, "cut me up like a pussy." Whatever that means... The point of this story is that I don't really have one, but while we were with the pussy cutter and his friends, most of them talked about this band saying stuff like, "fuck that pansy shit they are just an Evergreen ripoff." Which yeah, I guess to some degree they are, but they do it well, so I think that makes it a little better. Actually, some of the songs on this CD are quite great, in my opinion. The song "Forced Gratitude" has found its way on more than one mix tape I've made.... My only complaint would be that a lot of the songs sound alike, partly because the singer puts the same melody over them... But the great songs make up for the similarities and for the fact that they're from Bako. Sweet. MO (Alone Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

THE PINE • Lead Blocks for Feet 12"

This is The Pine's second full length and again it's right up there with the sound of The Hated and Evergreen. It's really emo, but I think it's okay because I'll take an emo band who bites The Hated over one who sounds like The Promise Ring any day of the week. Although there isn't one or two songs that really jumped out at me on this, it's all around a better record than their previous one, a little more diverse. I think this band is worth checking out, even if they are from 'the armpit of America.' PS: If you are ever stuck in Bako, go to Going Underground Records.... It's an awesome shop and Ronald is a great kid. MO (Alone Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS • Spearheading... CDep

The name makes you think that they're going to be some sort of emo-pop band, I know it did the first time I heard it. Of course this couldn't be further from the truth, there is a melodic element but it doesn't dominate. Really what we've got here is mid-tempo rockish hardcore with gritty vocals that are closer to singing than screaming. This recording has three new songs which are good but the recording is on the muddy side. BH (No Idea Records/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

PROTEST STAGNATION • 7"

Protest Stagnation delivers five crushing songs here. They play a nicely harsh yet melodic punk rock in the vein of Nausea or Detestation (not just because they have female vocals either). I really like the songs here, especially the timely political lyrics. They capture brooding and dark tones within songs designed around a faster tempo. The result is driving music that has a lot of depth. The guitarist of this band was also in Brother Inferior. LO (D.S.I. Records/PO Box 2353/Portland, OR 97208)

RADIO 4 • Gotham! LP

Radio 4 has released a few records on Gern Blandsten and I've never really paid attention to any of them. (That label made a 180 degree turn a few years ago and I was happy with the simplification of my life in not having to deal with "cutting edge" new wave when so much good nineties hardcore was still around. Of course, times have changed and there are so many keyboards everywhere this once periphery Gern Blandsten stuff has come back into the fold.) Anyway, Radio 4 do a good job of laying down dance beats and guitar licks with some conscience. Much of this LP talks about taking to the city with all the fire and passion you have inside you, about taking your ideas and pushing for new modes. So it is interesting that they do it with so much retro in their music. With the tricky melodies assigned to bands launched from the influence of Gang Of Four, Radio 4 takes to your ears. The complexity of a message gives Radio 4 a respectable depth and nice amount of bite. LO (Gern Blandsten/PO Box 356/River Edge, NJ 07661)

RADIO FREE DIXIE • Making Folk A Threat Again cassette

These four songs explore the themes of modern day struggle within the first world paradigm. Radio Free Dixie's songs are simply acoustic guitar and off key vocals. While none of these factors are expressly bad, they aren't expressly good either—and that makes for a lackluster mix of sound and message. LO (santiholley@yahoo.com)

RADON • We Bare All CD

This CD has everything Radon ever released, as well as a good dose of live songs (and live covers). Radon is a classic melodic hardcore band in the old '90s style. Rough around the edges, but strongly structured, their songs pick you up and take you away. Catchy and poppy the way Fuel or Jawbox was, Radon use raw energy and edgy moments to drive their songs home. Going back and listening to this CD, I am surprised how many of these songs are so familiar. I don't think I've ever owed a Radon record, but once you hear their stuff, it really stands out. "Facial Disobedience" is just one example of a totally original pop song that carves out Radon's niche. No Idea always does a good job of including full lyrics and lots of photos to help document their discographies—and this is no different. Tons of live covers at the end of this CD just rub in your face how much fun this band was live—and you'll never get to see them. LO (No Idea Records/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

RAEIN • CD

Raein hail from Italy, and play Ordination of Aaron/Closure inspired punk rock that jumps back and forth from placid to violent. Delicate guitar parts with throaty vocals, sometimes worn out to the point where it sounds like the singer needs a break, or at least a hug. When all is said and done, Raein do not create anything distinct or fresh, but if your into emotive and excitable music, then it wouldn't hurt to listen to a few tracks. MAH (Life of Hate Records c/o Fabio Guardigli/Via Somalia 78/47100 Forlì/Italy)

RAW POWER • ...Still Screaming (After 20 Years) CD

The title to this record is true, Raw Power have been around a long time. So, it should come as no surprise that they really know how to play at this point. They weave intensity and energy into every powerful song. The set of songs here are tough as shit, played precisely, and made to get you like a bullet in the head. Raw Power structures their songs for maximum effect, combining harshness and melody into one entity. It is a long set of seventeen songs, each one full of fury and power. Raw Power lost one of its founding members this year, but he does play on this recording. Sometimes you can listen to a record from an old band and really feel like you are getting a lesson in the progression of hardcore/punk. This is one of those. LO (Six Weeks/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotai, CA 94931)

REACHING FORWARD • The Conflit cassette

33 tracks. This is a Polish cassette release of previously released material by Reaching Forward plus an unreleased track. Side two has a live show recorded at a festival in Czech Republic. I had never heard them before and I must say they're pretty good at what they're doing. Not as good as Carry On, but not every band can be that good. Anyway, you get the LP on Reflections Records, their songs off two splits with Ensign and Bloodpact and those live tracks (in decent but not great sound quality). All the lyrics are translated in to Polish and the cassette cover is nicely done. A good thing to have in you car I guess. If you're into posi core... MH (X Refuse c/o Robert/PO Box 7/02-792 Warsaw/Poland)

REGRES • cassette

12 songs. Polish, positive hardcore that is well done and has plenty of kick. They sing in Polish (two thumbs up for that!) and their lyrics show true positivity by refraining from bitching and complaining about friends who let them down. "We are all here together. To support each other in action. (...) I am willing to listen to your opinions. There are times when it is hard to stay on top alone. Let us support one another." This is a cool little cassette and well worth your support. MH (X Refuse c/o Robert/PO Box 7/02-792 Warsaw/Poland)

RENTOKILLER • Free From the Tyranny of Popular CD

This band mixes it up between aggressive fast riffing and tough chugging HC. The sound is excellent and the production carries the energy of the band very well. This is for sure some circle pitting music. This has a modern sound, thick guitars with interesting riffs, a full sounding bass attack, an excellent lyricist, and a drummer who can play fast just as well as he can slow using interesting fills and accents to compliment the music. I would be lying if I said that there is no metal influence in the music. It's not mosh metal though. This stuff is a little too hectic to be thrown in that hole. While this might not be my bag of bagels I can appreciate the solid musicianship and the honest feel of the music. CF (Erik Harald/Folkungagatan 27a/50635 Borås/?)

RISEN • Left With the Ashes CD

Great driving, moshy political straight-edge hardcore out of Indianapolis. Not unlike Trial, but musically the metal is perhaps more tastefully implemented and lyrically it doesn't make me cringe with embarrassment as often. I also like the vocals more, though overall, the song-writing just isn't quite as memorable as was Trial's. Lyrically, more than the X's on their hands, these guys are pissed and are pulling back the curtains of illusions manifested as government, nation, religion, the corporate masters of capital, and the grotesque and inhuman parodies of life proffered as freedom. Aside from an apparent preoccupation with "justice," these guys are basically talking anarchism (whether they realize it or not), and that is a-okay by me. Maybe a bit short at only five songs, but otherwise a definite thumbs up for those who see straight edge as more than a pick-up scene until you net "the one" and hang up your kick-boxing boots and melt into the separation of a life of time-that-slips-away. TS (Catalyst Records/PO Box 30241/Indianapolis, IN 46230; www.xcatalystx.com)

THE ROBOCOP KRAUS • Living With Other People LP

This is a charming LP. The Robocop Kraus play a pleasing mix of British new wave and punk. Lovely sing-alongs and catchy choruses remind me of Elvis Costello and The Jam, while other synthed tweaks bring The Robocop Kraus sound into the present. Each tune tells the story of a person, situation, or vibe. The lyrics bring an interesting texture to the sound. All of the songs on this LP are incredibly listenable. LO (Day After Records/PO Box 153/As 35201/Czech Republic)

THE ROMANCE MORGUE • The Demo Days CD

This five song EP is the only release by this short lived band from Indiana. For those fans of Witching Hour records, Chris Williams who ran that label was in this band. This isn't far off from Witching Hour type stuff, but it's a little less chaotic than most of those records. More on the 'rock' side of things though, with lots of time changes, and vocals that go from yelling to screaming. Some parts remind me a lot of Born Against, then it has moments that are more in the vein of San Diego style hardcore. It's a good start and I'm sure if they would have stuck around they would have gotten quite popular. MO (Alone Records/PO Box 3019/Oswego, NY 13126)

RUINATION • CD

A lot of basic elements come together here. A tight thrash beat, aggressive overtones (especially in the vocals), crisp guitar, plain driving drums, and an overall straight forward assault with little distortion make up Ruination. I think this is the same stuff as the "Year One" CD that was released in the US on +/- Records. It has all of the recordings from the early records, plus an extensive live set from 2001. The live set seems to go on forever with an incredible amount of background noise and a low volume commentary. It is in real time, so you get treated to lots of down time between songs which takes away from the punch this band has. Unfortunately, even in the studio tracks, a lot of these songs are indistinguishable from one to the next. Vocals choke out biting commentary and dissatisfaction that sounds the same on most tracks. A couple songs get a little faster and add more hard-hitting vocals (choruses almost). "No One To Save You," for example, is incredibly catchy and over in a flash. There are some really good songs on here and some that you can skip. LO (Heroine Records/PO Box 35/47023 Cesena/Italy)

RORSCHACH • Live In Italy LP

I feel sort of bad reviewing this LP because there is no way in hell you are going to find this record unless you pay top dollar on E-Bay. There were only 550 made and they were numbered. The LP comes with two different booklets. One is filled with Rorschach flyers and the other has flyers. The record also comes with a poster. The seventeen tracks on the LP were all record in Italy in 1992. These are the same songs that are available on the CD version that is actually still available. A really nice release. Too bad it is so limited. KM (Gern Blandsten Records/PO Box 356/River Edge, NJ 07661)

RORSCHACH • Protestant LP

Again, it really makes no sense to be reviewing this. You won't be able to get this record. Like the Live In Italy LP, Protestant is limited to 550. There isn't an elaborate insert, but the cover is silk screened and the artwork was done by Pushead. Pushead has even signed each copy and hand numbered them as well. Also, no poster in here, just a lyric sheet. Rorschach was one of the most amazing hardcore bands from the early '90s, and that is saying a lot considering the sheer volume of awesome bands that were from that time period. They were tight, brutal, intricate, and powerful. The sort of hardcore that will always be timeless and awesome. You can get all of these tracks on their discography CD which is still available. KM (Gern Blandsten Records/PO Box 356/River Edge, NJ 07661)

RYTMIHÄIRÖ • Surmaa Kännissä CD

Apparently, not only is Rytmihäirö one of the oldest bands in Finland that is still together but they also feature a member of Força Macabra. They play blazing hardcore punk with metal and thrash influences. The songs are intricate and driving. The seven here pass by in under 13 minutes! I liked their structured style, but at times their stuff had a little too much dated metal for my tastes. LO (Hukkalevy/Pekantie 26/58500 Punkaharju/Finland)

RYTMIHÄIRÖ • Surman Vuodet—The Homicide Years CD

I've seen the name, though never heard these. Fins. 37 tracks that were apparently recorded between 1989-1991. I'd say the style and influences range from early Napalm Death, No Security, and Crude SS. I'd say this was extreme in the day, but it's really been kind of done to death at this point. The guitar sound is horrible. Right up there with Disclose. NW (\$8 to Morri Records/Pekantie 26/58500 Punkaharju/Finland)

SECOND AGE • The Tides Have Turned CD

I've heard it all now... straightedge posi youth core from Poland... Well, I will say this, it's a bit less generic than most of the USA posi youth that's plaguing the scene these days. This actually has a raw feel to it, which is good. But it's so fucking predictable. You know exactly when every breakdown is coming, every chant, etc. I guess this might be what all the edge kids love about this stuff? The predictability? God, they even cover a YOT song. Take a guess where their influences lay. NW (Refuge Records/PO Box 7/02792 Warszawa 78/Poland)

SECRET SERVICE • This Landmark Will Distort CD

When this started I thought it was going to be another emo-pop band. There is a slight emo-pop element at work here, but there's also a much heavier side to it. It kind of reminds me of Samiam. The lyrics are personal, so personal that much of the time I couldn't decode them. Overall this wasn't too bad, but at times it felt a bit flat. BH (www.mediateck.net/secretservice)

SEDITION • End in the Beginning, Beginning in the End CD

This CD is a compilation of all of Sedition's stuff except for a split EP. 40 songs clocking in at 79 minutes is enough Sedition to satisfy. This stuff is relentless. Fast hardcore with dual screamed vocals and a ton of samples starting off many songs. These samples always give a band a little more originality and they totally work here. A huge book is included with the CD that includes a ton of reading as well as some cool graphics. The packaging for this is top notch. I was definitely drawn after listening to this one. JG (Flat Earth Records)

SHARP TEETH • Curse of Convenience CD

9 tracks. Yes! This band definitely knows how to rock in that Shotmaker/Exploder/Drive Like Jehu kind of way. The CD doesn't look like much but you'll be all the happier once you put it in and hit play. Great, varied songwriting and plenty of energy. Give this band a chance!! I'll be looking forward to more releases by them. MH (Soul(sic) Records; www.sharpteeth.ca)

SHOCK TREATMENT • ...So Many Little Things CD

Kinetic, angular no-wave influenced hardcore with just a touch of discordance. This is the kind of rhythmic music that makes the Minutemen lover in me sit up and take notice. Much of the vocals are just short of screamed, and the restraint fits the sound well, as does the great up-front bass sound. This is what Computer Cougar should have sounded like, and then we wouldn't have to cringe in horror at the thought of Rorschach reunions. The lyrics are of a non-sequitur nature that doesn't do much for me; however, given that these cats are from Italy, I won't worry too much about it given the wacky nature of translating poetry between languages and the like. A well-recorded, solid release: if my attempts at description sound appealing to you, grab a copy. TS (Rumble Fish/c/o Antonello L'Abbate/Via Giusti 93/72015 Fasano (br)/Italy)

SHONBEN • 1999 Complete Recordings CD

Shonben play a fun and pleasing sort of pop. Much of the essence of this band reminds me of Jawbreaker. Bittersweet and sentimental lyrics are all over the place here. Songs like "Boats" and "Seventeen" show off their ability to write a complicated ballad that gets under your skin. Their music fuses happy and moody rock together into a very even toned sound. Shonben put every song they ever wrote on here, so you can get a good feel for this nice band. LO (Newest Industry/Unit 100/61 Wellfield Rd./Cardiff/CF24 3DG/UK)

SINCE BY MAN • We Sing the Body Electric LP

Okay, this sounds a lot like a metal hardcore band playing At the Drive In or something. I don't like it a lot, nor do I hate it, musically at least. However, I honestly think this band and a lot of other bands like this are total fucking BULLSHIT! This all seems like cleverly disguised marketing to me. Totally nonsensical lyrics that are alluding to some sort of "revolution" involving dancing, sex and cool clothes I'm guessing. So, basically they are pretty good at times when they are going all out but the post hardcore element of this band really brings the album down a lot. I just feel alienated by this shit. I mean, is hardcore in 2003 a bunch of pretty people going to dance clubs instead of shows and singing about recycled themes of personal revolution while our country is bombing the shit out of innocent people? I sure hope not. AH (Revelation Records/PO Box 5332/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

SKY PROMISES RAIN • CD

This CD opens with a catchy little rock number. The lyrics are personal and you can't get the chorus out of your head. The other four songs follow suit, but with an ever shrinking punchiness. By the end of the CD they seem to have moved from an energetic DC style indie rock, to a more mellow and minimal emo on the last track. LO (Millipede Records/Kohlfrsterstr. 2/90473 Nürnberg/Germany)

SISSY SPACEK/JOHN WEISE • Sississpskssissrs 12"

Ahhhhhhh, John Weise. This is the first noise act I ever saw in person. Actually, as far as that specific show goes, it was just me, a couple other onlookers, and this tripped out and blindfolded dancing emo guy. This deluxe gatefold (all blank except minimal cover art and info) is also a nice piece of white vinyl. As for the all important audio: a machine speeds into a frenzied crunch, from there on it's a mixture of what sounds like remnants of guitars, drums, and screams chopped and digitally distorted far past their breaking point. But that's not all. This 12" had a descent amount of minimal industrial ambient. Very light scraps, clanks, low end rumbling, and other sounds. I really liked these parts of this LP. Very soothing to a noise head like myself. If this sounds good to you, then be sure to give this a listen. Very nice. MJ (John Weise/PO Box 1076/Hollywood, CA 90078)

SKARNSPACE • CD

Skarnspace has been releasing records since 1995. The two members strive to create something new and original—which they do for the most part. What they create is a noise comprised of varied folk and electric elements. Some of this CD reminds me of that In Love With Jets LP from Antioch Arrow where they had just begun to lose it. Skarnspace uses freaky sounds that make you wonder what they hell they are doing. You'd have to listen to it over and over again to begin to get it. About halfway in, I started to just get sick of this "experimentation" and wanted to the damn thing to be over. Nineteen songs of start-stop keyboards entwined with folk music proved to be too much. LO (Lilac Sky/c/o Kjetil Holstad/Postboks 987/1500 Moss/Norway)

SKIN JOBS • Burn You Rainbow CD

16 tracks. Queer core and quite entertaining at that. Totally in your face stuff with a great sense of humour. This band must ROCK when they play live. With lyrics like: "I want a boyfriend who is just a boy and friend who I can play with in the deep end. And he can be young and cocky or old and stocky as long as his record collection keeps me rocking." "Put the fear back in queer, tell all your friends that we're recruiting." This is fabulous stuff with a great recording and lots of singalongs, clavalongs and maybe even shagalongs. The first few times I listened to this I kept comparing it to Placebo and I preferred Placebo, but, nah, I'm dumb, Skin Jobs is great and unique. The may sound a little tiny bit like Placebo, that's all. They're doing their own thing. I totally recommend this!!! MH (Agitprop Records/PO Box 748/Hanover, MA 02339)

SOUTHKILL • CD

I've been trying to play nice. I've been trying real hard this issue not to be so negative in my reviews, but...but...this is just so uninteresting I can't in any honest way recommend it to anyone. Dreary, slow to mid-tempo instrumental jams with a definite "emoish" tendency, though little character to hold this listener's ear—as if Cerberus Shoal were only bass, drums, a single guitar, and dropped the sort of "maritime" thing they have (had?) going on. Sorry. I wish had something "unit-moving" to say. TS (www.southkill.com)

THE SPECTACLE • 10"

An impressive booklet bursting with ideas and blazing metal hardcore bursting with passion. That is a nice combo. The Spectacle takes aim at their/our world with the keenly honed eyes of punks. They comment on our barriers and traps, they speak of inspiration, they hope for more. The Spectacle plays driving and droning music that crushes and screams. The sound reminds me of The Black Hand and From Ashes Rise. This whole project is very nicely done. Kudos. LO (Andreas Bakkemo/Kirkeveien 5/N-8009 Bodo/Norway)

SUBMACHINE • Live Fast Die Young CD

An unrelenting punk rock attack played with a hefty dose of Motorhead. Musically as well as lyrically this is as far removed from my world as, say, the new Phil Collins album. There's a lot of "fuck this" and "fuck that," but half the time I don't even know what they're going on about. 14 tracks and they all sound the same, too. This label also released the Crispus Attucks CD? Seems mighty strange to me. MH (Six Weeks Records/225 Lincoln Ave/Cotati, CA 94931)

SUMO • La Libera Danza Quotidiana CD

The only Italian Old School I know is Killing Time, so when these guys cite Kina and Peggio Punn as influences, I have to concede utter ignorance. However, when they mention Revolution Summer-era DC bands like Ignition and Rites of Spring, I lean forward and dig in—now we're on the same page. But aside from the Rites-influenced guitar riffs, Sumo doesn't really sound much like any particular band from DC's history. I would say they actually sound more like the second wave of emo-hardcore from the early '90s—like Fuel or Sinker—meets recent Sin Dios, but it somehow comes off as fresh and modern. That's probably not a good description, but this is original, and whatever it sounds like, I definitely like it. The bass-playing alone is worth the price of admission. Lyrics are present, and seem well-intentioned, if a tad flakey; since they are sung in Italian, I'll just assume something is lost in the translation. Highly recommended. TS (Nothing City/c/o Enrico Campagna/Via Veradini 9/40063 Zola Predosa (BO), Italy; utenti.lycos.it/sumoh/)

SURF NAZIS MUST DIE • Anti-Everything 7"

This is some fucking spastic and bitter punk rock. These Germans work on tearing you a new one with their incredibly raw thrash. The whole record is very crisp and basic. Songs complaining about a bunch of things they hate fill this record; each of them written like an anthem. Surf Nazis Must Die draw on a classic Black Flag style but play a messy thrash that is certainly modern, perhaps influenced by the likes of Charles Bronson or E.T.A. The more you listen to this record, the catchier it gets. LO (www.redredred.de)

SWIFT • Thoughts Are Thought CD

Tune your radio to the "rock station" and you will hear a Swift-esque band. Extremely unpleasant and horrendous sports metal with the whole singing mixed with screaming thing that is ever so popular right now, and needs to stop! And the lyrics... Gary Forsyth, you should be embarrassed for penning such abominations. I would give some examples, but I might throw up on my keyboard if I type them. And as if the music wasn't punishment enough, there is a QuickTime video that plays on computers. The only redeeming quality of this record is a cover of Depeche Mode's "Enjoy The Silence," but that is only good for novelty purposes. The fellows in Swift obviously take their band very seriously, and after listening to Thoughts Are Thought I can only give this advice: STOP! I suggest you do what your parents did. Get a job sir(s). MAH (Tribunal Records/PO Box 49322/Greensboro, NC 27419)

SORRY ABOUT DRESDEN • Let It Rest CD

Sorry About Dresden plays indie rock with two very distinct influences. Their sound vacillates between Elvis Costello & The Attractions and Jets To Brazil—and sometimes a little of both. It is a combination that makes for pleasing melodies and sweet hooks. I appreciate the rawness they left in the mix giving Let It Rest a freshness often missed by indie releases. LO (Saddle Creek/PO Box 8554/Omaha, NE 68108)

SOUNDS FAMILIAR • CD

Sure does... Par for the course emo rock, sort of like early Get Up Kids, except the singer sounds like he has already experienced puberty. MAH (Weird Science/Romerstrasse 55a/53111 Bonn/Germany)

SYLVIE • I Wish I Was Driving CD

Sylvie is a soothing indie rock outfit. Though the overall tone is soft, melodious rhythms drive forward each song accompanied by strongly emotional vocals. It makes for a nicely full and exact sound. Their songs are precise as the lyrics introspective stories about life. Each song works like a snapshot, capturing whatever is within its small scope. LO (Does Everyone Stare?/PO Box 35004/Edmonton, AB/T5K 2R8/Canada)

SYNDICATE • Since Now All is Lost CD

Painful Bridge Nine mosh metal that I'd say was almost good if I wasn't so predisposed to equate shit like this with guys who wear multi-colored band shirts. MM (www.deplorablerecordings.com)

THIS IS MY FIST! • I Don't Want To Startle You But... 7"

Fuck yeah! I'm really fucking glad that this band is around right now. They drove all the way down here from the Bay Area last month to play a house show with the Insurgent and Hope and it was the fucking best shit ever (at least for those of us who weren't sick). They all arrived together and all of a sudden they came around the corner and there are like twelve of them, all scraggly looking, with big smiles, and a fucking dog, as the sun was setting behind them. Three of them (with the dog, Styles) were This Is My Fist! They play East Bay punk with female vocals. It's extremely fucking catchy, but still raw and aggressive and without being too poppy or clean. I think it sounds like it would fit somewhere between Astrid Oto and Discount, (but less pop, more punk.) It's really fucking good! FIL (Left Off the Dial Records/PO Box 3941/Oakland, CA 94609)

THREE FIFTEEN • The Heart Stops Beating 7"

Six songs of driving and energetic hardcore. Envision a mixture of Gorilla Biscuits and Silent Majority and you have Three Fifteen. I was not to into this 7", but if you are way into those bands, then you might be. MAH (Solution: Stab It/74 Dodge Ave./Pittsfield, MA 01201)

THUMBS UP! • Building An Army 7"

This is just your average hardcore band playing your average hardcore songs. The one saving grace to this record is the song "Declaration Of War," which seems to be about killing Boston based hipsters. I have been to Boston, and I must say, some of these people are douche bags. Quit doing coke and thinking you better than everyone, assholes. MAH (Rodent Popsicle Records/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)

TORQUEMADA • L'essere Umano Nell'epoca Della... CD

Torquemada plays a furiously fast mix of hardcore and grindcore. DIY to the max, this recording and its corresponding booklet are overflowing with ideas. Lyrics that decry the wrongs of the world and the wrongs we do to one another. Though the picture they paint is bleak, Torquemada does so to inspire hope to change. (Besides, happy lyrics would not fit with the music at all.) The booklet comes with lyrics in Italian, Spanish, and English. In these 18 songs, the band creates a wall of noise and melody for the listener to crash against. They attack each song creating a wild and energetic sound. For anyone that likes to be pummeled with thick and noisy music... Torquemada is here to please. LO (Matello Alonge/Via Pigafetta 11/10129 Torino/Italy)

TRAPPED IN LIFE • 12 Icons CD

Killer mid-tempo hardcore from France. This has that chugga-chugga New York feel to it at times although I don't think the metal feel gets in the way. Great driving music. Fuck yeah. JG (21 Rue Keller/75011 Paris/France)

UNPERSONS • CD

Prepare to be blown away by a furious hardcore sound here. Unpersons lay down nine songs with serious energy and intensity. They move through melodic elements as the storm and fury rises. They use quiet as a building element before the crashing guitars and screaming vocals reign supreme. So much of these songs are emotive hardcore, yet with a harder sound than anyone would normally attribute to the genre. I also liked the way their lyrics seem to drip with description and create a palatable feeling for the sound to carry. Unpersons has a surprising edge and good sound that makes for one happy reviewer. LO (Born To Die/1904 NW 31 St./Oklahoma City, OK 73118)

UWHARRIA • Fury In The Foothills CD

"Fury In The Foothills" is an appropriate name for this deep ecology inspired band. There are thirteen studio tracks and two live tracks. The sound is really awesome. I would compare Uwharria to early Corrosion Of Conformity: powerful hardcore with passionate vocal squall. Most of the songs are about the natural order with plenty of references to plants and animals, and they even have some birds and whales doing guest vocals; that's something not every release can claim! The lyrics will be more than some can handle since the eco-friendly attitude is all pervasive, which in my opinion is a good trait, but it can be perceived as being a bit over the top. In any event, this is a great sounding and thoughtful CD. KM (Slave Records/PO Box 10093/Greensboro, NC 27404)

THE UNDERWATER • Bleed Me Blue CD

Radio Rock, pure and simple. Why the fuck would you send this to *HeartattaCk*? This is a very slick, very well-designed seven-song CD of catchy and overproduced tunes played by wonderfully beautiful young men who in their promo shot may or may not be wearing makeup and who each, in their long, long thank-you lists thank God first. These guys were made for MTV, from generic lyrics to stylin' hairdos. It's just... perfect. For some reason I pictured this band playing at Christian youth group concerts. But that's just me. PM (Tribunal Records/PO Box 49322/Greensboro, NC 27419)

UNISON • LP

This band has a lot of heart and not just that, their music has some of the visceral power of bands like the Tragedy and the awesome energy of The Exploder or Light The Fuse And Run. They don't really sound like any of those bands, but they do combine some of those elements in their sound. This is very cool and a lot harder and meaner than what I expected. A very convincing release. The artwork and the lyrics are up to par. Go check this out. MH (Good Samaritan/Zujic Bojan/Cara Dusana 110 Trn/78000 Banja Luka/Republika Srpska/Bosnia)

CLASSIFIEDS

Starting A DIY Mix Tape Trade: donate your mix tape and receive one in return! Please list bands and song titles. A cover would be nice. If you're interested in sharing music and ideas, send your mix tape to: Absence of Malice c/o Marc Silverstein/5275 Whisper Dr./Coral Springs, FL 33067

You Wanna Race or Dontcha? Have: Dirty club, greasy food, gas money, P.A., beer! Need: DIY bands E-mail: psfoff666@msn.com Send promo shit to 711 Main Ave S.W./Hickory, NC 28602

23 year old crusty peace punk seeking correspondence from Baltimore Punks. I'm moving in May. Interests include bicycling, writing, candles, plants, philosophy, and photography. Looking for veg/queer friendly folks to connect with. Please write!! Stu/240 E. Kline Ave/Lansford, PA 18232

Chord Easy shows how to choose chords. Full version: 23 example-songs; many aids; 40 pgs 5x8 \$3 or Short version: 10 easiest songs; 9 chords max; \$1 Dwelling Portably/PO Box 190-cch/Philomath, OR 97370

Stir Krazy 'zine open for submissions. Antiauthoritarian. Anticorporate. Anticensorship, etc. Write it, send it, and we'll print it - Unless it really sucks! What are you? Scared? *Stir Krazy* c/o G. Erwin/118 W. Elm/Rochester, NY 14445

Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned by Jacob David/PO Box 3050/Eureka, CA 95502 [3 stamps or trade] "Like taking Strom Thurmond's Soiled Confederate flag adult diaper and slapping it down on stupid inbred racist pig Trent Lott's toupee-wearing helmethead!"

VELOCITY ENGINE • Version.1 CD

Velocity Engine follows the path laid out by largely successful pop-punk bands. Driving guitar melodies, straightforward vocals with just enough sweetness, and an upbeat tempo. You can easily sing along to the sappy stuff and get a little excited when things begin to build. At the heavier moments, it makes sense that a member of Bane is in this band. Still, there is so much polished pop-punk here I can't even begin find this edgy. Tons of hugely popular punk bands have used this same formula. While it does create a sound people love, the formula has become more than tired for this reviewer. LO (The Life Recording Company/43 Essex St./Marlboro, MA 01752)

VICIOUS WHITE LIES • CD

Playing discordant yet melodic punk rock that seems to be based on the sounds of Slant Six, Heavens To Betsey, and Bikini Kill, Vicious White Lies give me exactly what I want. Their dreamy girl vocals full of wail and anger, the start-stop punk rhythms, and the aggressive style of music are all things I eat up with a spoon. Plus, they do it raw and they do it well. Woo hoo! LO (viciouswhitelies@yahoo.com)

VISION TUNNEL • CD

I have no clue how to review this record. It's not bad bad, but it's pretty bad. Basically it's cushy indie rock with female vocals. If this came on the radio I would pop in a mix tape and never look back. MAH (Mala Raza/Apdo, 6037/50080 Zaragoza/Spain)

WHAT THE KIDS WANT • Inside Jokes Explained 7"

This is why kids from Bloomington rule. They know how to have some fucking fun! What The Kids Want is an Indiana based trio that play catchy pop punk with songs about stealing flags from frat houses and just getting away from things. If the person or persons who do Plan-It-X records are reading this, you should put out something by this band! If you are anyone else, you should buy this 7"! MAH (Talking Dog Records/PO Box 954/Bloomington, IN 47402)

WHERE'S LEO? • 6 Feet On The Ground CD

Eleven tracks. This band sounds exactly, and I mean exactly, like The Caulfields. If you don't know them, then imagine a mix between Weezer and the Gin Blossoms. If you don't know the Gin Blossoms just imagine Weezer with more soulful singing. If you don't know Weezer (and yes, I'm talking to you, Kent) then be proud and happy, have some chips and enjoy your day. Oh, having said all that this is of course competently played and has a perfect sound. The artwork is on the cheap and dull side, but I'm only mentioning that because I'm running out of things to say. If you want to read the lyrics send them a self addressed stamped envelope because, really, it would have been so amazingly, unbelievably, fucking annoying to have them included in the CD in the first place, right? Stay out of my garden, boys. Life's too short to be dealing with cheap farts like you. MH (Kosher Records/Where's Leo/8764 El Capitan Ave./Fountain Valley, CA 92708) *Chips... mmmmm.... good... I wish I had some chips, and some salsa, and some chips... mmmmm.... good... - Kent*

WOLF EYES • Dead Hills CD

Three tracks. Track#1: I'm not sure what this is, but it sounds like the soundtrack to a really, really scary horror movie. It's not the kind of thing you would want to be listening to alone in a cabin in the woods. At first I was going to dismiss this as nothing but noise. It does however have an extremely chilling and haunting effect and even though I can't imagine why somebody would want to listen to this, I can't help but be fascinated. It's totally creepy, but it speaks right to your core. You don't so much hear it as you feel it. Track#2: This sounds more like a robot fight and one of them or maybe both are drunk and falling down a lot. Track#3: Great, now the robots have sex. Or maybe they're just really tired. At least they've calmed down a little... All in all this has been an interesting listen and nothing like anything else I've had to review. Recommended to folks who're into experimental stuff. MH (Troubleman/16 Willow St./Bayonne, NJ 07002)

WORN THIN • Remnants Of What Could Have Been 7"

Worn Thin is a positive and swarming hardcore band from Washington, DC. The six songs on this 7" are in line with Turning Point, Chain Strength, and the likes. Nothing new, but worth picking up. MAH (Youngblood Records/217 W Main St./Ephrata, PA 17522)

ZERO TOLERANCE TASK FORCE • Punk Rockery CD

This is an aptly-titled CD, full of punk attitude. With song titles like "Dead Cops," "Jesus Was a Sandnigger," and "I Wanna Be a Terrorist," there's a certain willingness to be politically outrageous that our rather clean-cut and largely liberal hardcore scene tends to avoid. Present here is a healthy hatred of hypocrisy, which is always welcome in the punk, as far as I'm concerned. In the stereo, this sounds a lot more like the sonically diverse US punk scene of the late '70s-early '80s, specifically that era's output from bands like the Dead Kennedys, the Big Boys, and maybe the Feederz (though they came a bit later), but nowhere near as listenable as any one of those bands. My ears don't like the sounds, but the obnoxiousness is appreciated, as are some of the better in-your-face lyrics. TS (Purple Hero Distributors/2301 E Broadway, Ste 112/Tucson, AZ 85719)

ZŁODZIEJE ROWERÓW • Ten Moment CD

Okay, I've really heard it all now... Emo from Poland. I'm sorry, but this stuff lacks any feeling or emotion to this reviewer. I guess the downfall of living in this moment of history is that anybody with \$1000 can put out their own CD. This means we have yet again another fucking choice... too many choices already. If you can tell I hate this shit... fucking discordant guitars that are thin and annoying to my ears. NW (Refuse Records/PO Box 7/02792 Warszawa 78/Poland)

LA QUIETE/ THE APOPLEX TWIST ORCHESTRA • split 7"

La Quiete are anything but quiet. Instead, they play driving chaotic hardcore with lots of aggression. Screamo techniques run throughout each song, as La Quiete infuses a little extra melody into that Reversal Of Man genre. The three songs here are short and sweet; their thoughtful lyrics make for a nice package all around. The Apoplexy Twist Orchestra continues the screamo vibe on their side of the record. Their three songs pass quickly, even though the songs are filled with distinct structures of build up and climax. The fury of these songs has a nice raw tone. LO (Heroine Records/PO Box 35/47023 Cesena/Italy)

THE FUTURES/ WAGPLATY • The Brand New Sound of Degeneration split CD

All right!! First, 3 studio tracks by The Futures. Second, 3 studio tracks by Wagplaty. Third, some live tracks by The Futures. Fourth, and lastly, some live tracks by Wagplaty. It's a weird song arrangement, but it works. If you didn't know, both bands are from Japan, and both play energetic punk rock'n' roll. The Futures are their usual selves: fast paced, catchy bass and guitar riffs, hyperactive vocals. Wagplaty aren't as energetic, but more singalong, and they totally rock. Both bands kick out some good songs, and the live tracks are cool as well. Pick this one up if you're into Japanese punk. DJ (Jerk Off Records/203, 1-15-20, Kishinosato Higashi/Nishinari-Ku/557-0042 Osaka/Japan)

RECKLESS DEERHUNTERS/ DANCING LEPERS • split 7"

Okay, this is pretty crazy... 700 of these exist and they are available for free (you should contact the label about the shipping), I guess it was financed by a benefit show for the Brandon Collective. The Reckless Deerhunters ravage through 3 songs that don't let up, and I guess would fall into the "thrash" category (I hate that fucking word these days). Cool stuff from them though. Dancing Lepers are really fucking weird sounding. They have the kind of sound punk bands weren't afraid of using in the mid '80s. I'd say there's a strong DK's influence here. Cool stuff. Write Bob Suren at Sound Idea if you want a free record, but remember the shipping and stamps. NW (Sound Idea Records/PO Box 3204/Brandon, FL 33509)

KNIFED/BASTARD YOUTH • split 7"

I was interested at first because both bands are from Ireland. Upon opening the sleeve, I was angered by Knifed's song titles: "I Like it Anal," and "Dropkick Murphy's Fuck Off." I got the impression that some macho guy wrote these songs. They didn't put the lyrics, but I don't want to know them anyway. Plus, another thing I didn't get was a picture of the geographic shape of Ireland with text inside it saying "This is Eircore, Not Sweden." Do they dislike Sweden? Why? On the other side of the record, Bastard Youth doesn't offend me, but it doesn't impress me either. There are better bands than these in Ireland. DJ (Control Records; mero32@eircom.net)

THE CINEMA EYE/AUDION • split CDep

Two songs from each band make this a short one. In the case of The Cinema Eye, it left me wanting more. Pointed electric new wave with haunting female vocals flip all the right switches. Comparable to Pretty Girls Make Graves, but so much more off beat and punk. The Cinema Eye have two nearly perfect keyboard rockers on here. Wow. Now, I don't know if it is my affinity for female vocals or the fact that Audion have to follow up the aforementioned band, but these two guys fell short. Audion has a sticky and thick sound mixing drums, guitar, keyboards, and vocals in a familiar way. The aggressive nature creates waves of back and forth sound for you to fall into. It is arty and dark, and powerful in it's own way. Still, The Cinema Eye really makes this record worth it. LO (www.sound-virus.com)

TWIN WRECKS THE MEMORY/JESUS AND THE DEVIL • split 7"

Jesus And The Devil comes out with a catchy rock tune with a blues/garage feel. The song progresses nicely, as clear vocals weave a story-like poem for the listener. It has a strong college rock feel. Twin Wrecks bring a post-modern college rock song with slightly offbeat rhythms and oddly straightforward vocals. They go for depth as the sound is layered and fuzzed; creating something that is just slightly off center. Neither of these bands spoke to me particularly, but you can appreciate their attempt to do new things within the alt-rock genre. LO (Fudge Sickill Records/PO Box 7052/Villa Park, IL 60181)

THE CRUNKY KIDS/BRODY'S MILITIA • split 7"

The Crunky Kids: 4 fast little tunes which at least musically remind me somewhat of the Death Wish Kids (minus the pizzazz). The songs might just be tad too long to keep the power up, but the production is pleasingly thrashy. I'm also reminded of bands like Christ On A Crucifix and the Dead Kennedys. The Crunky Kids write the kind of lyrics that just rattle off a couple of slogans about a certain subject without actually going very deep, just like it was popular (oh shit!) 25 years ago. Brody's Militia sounds a lot like Man Is The Bastard to me, probably due to a thoroughly screwed up production which makes this sound as if it had been recorded with the help of a bulldozer. But I mean that as a compliment. Fast and brutal. My mom didn't like it. MH (Distort Ohio/818 North Metcalf Street/Lima, OH 45801)

PHOBIA/RESIST AND EXIST • split LP

Phobia delivers 5 blasts of high-speed grindcore, exactly what one expects from them. Resist and Exist play d-beat peace punk, with not one but two intros, one acoustic with keyboards, the other way chunky and crossover. Solid and right on political lyrics to match d-beat punk core. CD (Profane Existence/PO Box 8722/Minneapolis, MN 55408)

LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER/ KONTRAATTAQUE • split CD

Looking for an Answer, from Spain, play shredding political grindcore with Spanish lyrics. Songs mainly deal with political issues although some social problems, such as friendships, are also here. This stuff never lets up. Kontraattaque, from California, play total brutal hardcore with screaming vocals. These songs, also in Spanish, deal with important political issues. I especially liked the "fuck off" song to S.O.D. and I can second everything said in that track. Lyrics for both bands are printed in both Spanish and English. A killer CD, although I wish it could have been a bit longer. Total time for both bands is 34 minutes. JG (La Idea/PO Box 18251/28080 Madrid/Spain)

EX NIHILO/HELLO NOISY • split 12"

Hello Noisy's four songs are experimental flights of fancy. Bleeps, guitar tweaks, and on-again-off-again drum beats are their mainstay. It is played with enough forward momentum to keep the songs interesting, mostly because the sounds seem to be converging on some point. Ex Nihilo fills their side of the record with just two songs. Each of them a drawn out and dark tune seemingly cast out into the cold abyss. It is the tempo changes and vocals that add any sort of relief from the punishing sound. Elements of From Ashes Rise-esque brutal hardcore are all over their sound. Their band consists of drums and two guitars, no bass. This recording is so raw it wasn't even mastered. LO (Acentric/12947 Arroyo De Arguello/Saratoga, CA 95070)

KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS/ DEL CIELO • split 7"

Kill The Man Who Questions returns again with more blistering hardcore. Their sound is rough and uncontainable. Distorted fury and gut-wrenching intensity are waiting for you here. I like the way they use biting melodies and crunchy hardcore tones together. These three songs take on punk apathy, getting older, and police violence. It is a smart mix of commentary and critique. Del Cielo is on a completely different trip but have an equal amount of honest delivery and emotional intensity. They play sweet sounding poppy punk with pretty female vocals. The two songs here explore the feelings involved with love and loneliness. Del Cielo does a great job at this sound, and comes out with a very appealing set of songs for this split. The contrast between these two bands makes each of their merits all the more enjoyable for me. LO (Ed Walters Records/2416 S Wamock St./Philadelphia, PA 19148)

LA QUIETE/ACRIMONIE • split 7"

La Quiete alternate between distortion-free jangling and melodic walls of sound, though not without the right amount of harshness and bite. Reminiscent of some of the better emo-hardcore of the mid-'90s. The same sort of sound the French always do so well. Acrimonia are more like an updated Union of Uranus with some grindcore and black metal influences, especially on the vocals...which actually kills this for me because I cannot stand the contrived nature of those sort of deep growl-y vocals. Always reminds of the Muppets. TS (Life of Hate Records/c/o: Fabio Guardigli/Via Somalia 78/47100 Forlì, Italy; www.lifeofhate.com)

THE LAZER/ SCENT OF HUMAN HISTORY • split CD

The Scent of Human History play meandering slow songs with screamed vocals. They're the type of band whose songs you start getting into and then realize its going to go on for another four or five minutes. Their songs aren't bad, just too long. The Lazer play short melodic punk songs, kind of reminded me of Crimpshrine. The songs are Okay, but they don't really sound all that different from the thousands of other bands already playing this style of music. BH (\$6 to Jay/382 St. Luke Pl./Franklin Sq., NY 11010)

APATHETIC YOUTH/SCAREDYCAT • split 7"

Fuck yes. This is a powerful release. Both bands deliver high energy fast hardcore, which jumps out of the speakers. Apathetic youth are raw more of an old school flavor, with trading off vocal work. Scaredycat rip it up with more of a modern thrash approach, with unpredictable parts, and random timing. These bands complement each other well, and fuckin' rip. This EP is urgent and pissed off, the way it should be. Keep your eye out for these guys. CD (Noise Annoys Records/607 S Walnut/Inglewood, CA 90301)

FEAST OR FAMINE/SOCIAL OUTCAST • split LP

FOF play some raging pissed off hardcore. Hardcore for the punks, not fashionable trendsters or jock meathed types. Socio-political lyrics, if you could consider the rotting tomb of our world social commentary. Raw punk played in a proud tradition. Pissed off vocals scream over distorted guitars and pounding drums. D-beat with just enough thrash to keep it interesting. These dudes have definitely got the look going on too. Especially the dude with the beard and liberty spikes! Honestly though, if you dig shit like classic Chaos UK, Discharge, Anti-Cimex etc... you know, the good shit, *real* punk with a modern motor city twist. Social Outcast is along the lines of The Varukers with a street punk/NYHC injection. This side of the split was originally supposed to come out with Hell Krusher a little while back, but I guess it never came together. This band has since broken up, but this shit still keeps its strength years later. This is a really great split. It has rad artwork and pictures, killer lyrics and best of all, pissed as fuck hardcore punk with no filler! This is a taste of older and newer Detroit on one slab of 12" love. CF (Battlery Records/PO Box 381224/Clinton TWP, MI 48038)

TODSCHICKER/KELLERASELN • split 7"

Both bands manage to play boring, uninspired German punk/hardcore/grind. I didn't enjoy listening to this due to the fact that it was just not good at all. DJ (stepmi@gmx.de)

CREAM ABDUL BABAR/KYLESA • split CD

This isn't really my scene, but hats off to both these bands: they crush and destroy. Both have been around for a while, though it's my first listen to either; I figure each already have sizable followings, but here goes my attempt: CAB (yet another stupid name) sort of make me think of a combination of Tragedy and Absinthe, but with weird electronica/noise bits thrown in for good measure. Maybe Neurosis would be a more apt comparison? Kylea are intricate, melodic, heavy, dynamic; these songs are incredibly well-written. The vocals are powerful and moving. There is a lot more diversity here than I expected; one of the songs could even be compared to Moss Icon. There's a lot going on here for a variety of ears to enjoy. For a CD in a jewel case, this is a damn attractive package. Very tasteful in color, texture, and minimal layout; also I'm a sucker for silver ink. Recommended. TS (At a Loss Recordings/PO Box 582/Eastlake, CO 80614-0582; www.atalossrecordings.com)

CHARCOAL HUMAN/ UPSIDE DOWN FLAG • split 7"

Both bands are from Australia, play grind/hardcore, but leave a lot to be desired. I listen to a song, and I like it so far, but suddenly they add some hardcore breakdown that sounds terrible, and I'm saying "Why did they have to mess up a good thing?" Whether it's a breakdown, guitar riffs that don't fit in, or a song going on too long, I only partly enjoy this 7". These bands have potential, and they could become much better if they focused their efforts on one style. DJ (Deplorable Records/PO Box 191/Balmain NSW 2041/Australia)

BURNPILE/THE STAKE OUT • split LP

Whoa! Burnpile are something else. Crazy bass playing, odd riffing, triplet pounding drums, and vocals only a crazed mad man would be able to spew forth. How does one describe madness like this? Very evil, very unique, very something... where do these guys come up with this stuff?! The bass player is awesome, all the guys are all over the place but this dude is crazy. This is technical in a way, it's also very raw. I am mystified. The Stake Out plays some fast old school sounding hardcore. Totally energetic and furious. Great lyrics about religion and how much society can be a drag, you know the deal. If you like bands like DS-13 you will be stoked! I bet these guys are rad to see live. This is definitely an interesting split. One band plays whacked and twisted metal stuff and the other plays old school hardcore. Interesting, to say the least. CF (Six Weeks/225 Lincoln Ave./Cotati, CA 94931)

LAB RATS/SCISSORHANDS • split LP

Both bands offer up some youthful, energetic hardcore. Scissorhands have a catchy straight forward '80s feel, with some cool ass wailed vocals. Lab Rats have more of a youth crew sound, sort of like Dirty Dirt and the Dirts. Fuck yes, I'm stoked on both sides of this slab o wax. CD (www.leftoffthedial.net)

GRITOS DE ALBERTA/HERESIA • split 7"

Fucking Dropout worship like crazy on this record. Cool sounding crust from Brazil that has a great bass sound on both sides of the record. Seven songs in total on this split. Musically I'd say I prefer the Heresia side more, as the songs are tighter and more comprehensible. I love the cover art for the Gritos side though... brutal is the word on this crust attack. I guess this is a re-release. NW (Ponk Records/PO Box 4664/Walnut Creek, CA 94596)

SCHEMATIC OF A WAKING LIFE/STAB YOU IN THE HEAD AND EAT YOUR FACE OFF • split 7"

Schematic Of A Waking Life plays a beautifully complex song full of hardcore noise, mild screamo elements, and a good dose of straightforward melody. In it they discuss the flaws in the mental health system that too easily labels people as abnormal and hands out pills. It is well stated and delivered with passion. The song on here is epic with melodic movements of crashing hardcore elements and emotional fury. Stab You In The Head And Eat Your Face Off contrasts that sound with yet another appealing noise. Straightforward hardcore with a nice crisp edge. Their sound is somewhere between sing along youth crew and mid-tempo thrash. Their five songs use witty lyrics and blasting guitars to punch you in the face (figuratively) with an idea. The essence of this band is very much like Rambo or Crucial Unit. Fast and fun, Stab You In The Head And Eat Your Face Off are a little less scary than their name would lead you to believe—but still pretty potent. This is a good record all around. LO (www.redscroll.com)

BUNNIES ON STRIKE/ BEER FOR BREAKFAST • split 7"

A very cool little package from the Netherlands: Bunnies on Strike are Riot Grrl-influenced punk, melodic, yet noisy; reserved, yet powerful. Very fresh. I can't think of a particular band they sound like, but I like this a whole lot and I think it would appeal to a wide array of tastes. B.O.S. are very political, kicking out some serious analyses of privilege, self-defense, and exploitation of human and animal alike. Beer for Breakfast wrap it up on the flip side with some great sloppy hardcore punk, driven by furious leads and desperate vocals screaming to stay on top of the mix. Though they obviously aren't taking themselves entirely seriously, there's still a certain wary awareness here that shines through. This is what more punk should be like, not the sappy pop shit we're inundated with here in the States. The packing is quite beautiful, and Wasted Youth Power has an explicit commitment to DIY that I find laudable. It's becoming increasingly apparent that Europe is taking a serious lead in world relevance lately; it would seem this is becoming the case for punk and hardcore as well. As an example, this seven inch come highly recommended. TS (Bunnies on Strike/Postbus 10500/2501 HM Den Haag/The Netherlands/Europe; http://www.bunniesonstrike.cjb.net/; http://www.geocities.com/wastedyouthpower/)

MIDSUMMER/COASTAL • split CD

Midsummer has a lilting and moody emo sound. Their songs fill themselves with bittersweet melodies, layered vocals, and lingering tones. Their five songs are well polished and perfectly suited for the emotive indie rock genre. Coastal play music so light, you can miss it easily. They shoot for the haunting melody in a minimalist style. A couple of their songs sound as if they are just about to fade away and end, but then that fading part goes on for so long you come to realize that is the actual song. It felt like their five songs went on forever. Really, it got to be sort of painful for this reviewer. LO (Sun Sea Sky Productions/307 W Lake Dr./Random Lake, WI 53075)

PAST MISTAKES/ RED WINTER DYING • +++++ split CD

Past Makes play a nearly poppy emo rock that is sweet and sappy. Each song is a new ode to the same old broken heart, though told with enough witty punches to keep the theme from being totally tired. Trampled upon and loving it, Past Mistakes turn this muse into their three songs of rocking indie rock. How much Morrissey do these guys listen to? After making a superficial judgement based on this CD's packaging, I was blown away by the heaviness of Red Winter Dying. They play sick and brutal, metal-laced hardcore that reminds me of those early Converge records. Fittingly, their lyrics decry pain and struggle with an artistically dark slant. The three songs here are a nice little punch that gets to the point and doesn't hand around too long. LO (The New Beat/3100 Sevier Ave./Knoxville, TN 37920)

BLAKE, ROBERT/ PETERSEN, ERIK • Bellingham & Philadelphia split CD

I like this CD a lot. Both artists contribute six songs a piece of unpolished folk music with an intimate recorded sound. Political and personal lyrics that you will be singing along with after the third of fourth listen. If you live in Philadelphia, then you should own this CD for the Robert Blake track "Philadelphia" alone. MAH (Art of the Underground/59 Custer St./Buffalo, NY 14214)

LOUISE CYPHRE/ THE APOPLEXY TWIST ORCHESTRA • split 10"

Louise Cyphre plays intense screamo in the vein of Orchid's *Chaos Is Me* LP. Plenty of soft guitar parts and intricate fingering before the crushing comes. This band uses tempo changes and volume to their advantage as they create an assault of modern hardcore noise in eight songs. On the flipside you are treated to a similar sound from The Apoplexy Twist Orchestra. (Phew, that is a tough one to type. What's with the extra long names?) Here even more Orchid-esque hardcore fills my stereo. What I like about this band is there very slow tempo and big movements. Everything about this set of five songs is dramatic and grand. Both bands sing in German with a little English mixed in. Their lyrics are a fitting mix of existential questions and personal discovery. The similarities in these bands make for a complimentary split. LO (Heroine Records/PO Box 35/47023 Cesena/Italy)

FLASHBULB MEMORY/ JOSHUA FIT FOR BATTLE • split LP

Three booklets accompany this LP, one each from the bands and one from the label. Flashbulb Memory sing of social and cultural interactions. Their booklet includes detailed explanations of their lyrics. Their music is medium tempo guitar heavy rock and roll with hoarse, shouted vocals. They contribute six reasonably well-recorded songs. The Joshua Fit For Battle lyrics become the text for an angst filled comic set in a nightmare world. Their music is a loud rumbling thrashy sludge with occasional quiet parts'. Dual vocals scream unintelligibly. This release is a benefit for *Z Magazine* by Revolutionary Audio. Their booklet contains two essays that critique corporate media and its control over culture and the flow of information. One essay by Michael Alpert investigates ways that peace and justice movements might best establish and use a mass media presence. He suggests a network of locally based radio and print outlets that act nationally to present uncompromised radical content. SJS (Revolutionary Audio/228 Sycamore St./Watertown, MA 02472)

COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY RHYTHMS/ I BELONG • split CD

In an attempt to confuse this reviewer, this release comes with two booklets that repeat some of the same information in each. One booklet is definitely the accompanying one for the release as it has information about both bands and the meanings of their songs. The other booklet talks mostly about the songs and ideas from Communist Conspiracy Rhythms. I really enjoyed their mission statement: "To stop living in the myth of reality and start living in the magic of (our) reality." Communist Conspiracy Rhythms area punchy little punk band with a very raw edge. Their songs are all fast and furious, rowdy and raging, dirty and distorted, and generally a little out of control. I appreciated the ideas in their lyrics and booklets more than the sound though. I Belong plays sappy emotive rock, some might say indie. Their songs are filled with melodic hooks, sorrowful lyrics, and sad vocals. Since the recording is so gritty, it actually gives a layer of depth to the semi-tired genre and makes the I Belong songs delightfully basic. Again, their contribution to the booklet makes the idea of this band more interesting. LO (www.geocities.com/urbansquirrelrecords)

OTOPHOBIA/REASON OF INSANITY • split 7"

ROI play some more punky sounding type stuff. Fast drumming and guitars with garbled vocals. This kind of reminds me of what a lot of Los Angeles bands were doing in the early to mid-'90s like Naked Aggression or Litmus Green. Otophobia are more along the lines of Poison Idea, but darker and faster. Fast and pissed off at the world type shit. If these two bands got in a fight my money would be on Otophobia. CF (Sound Idea/PO Box 3204/Brandon, FL 33509-3204)

LAST SECURITY/MAN IN SHACKLES • split 7"

MIS go straight for the throat right at the start. These guys are pissed! Fast and hard in your face aggressive thrash punk like only the Swedes can play. The lyrics are about religion, environmental decay, and feelings of powerlessness. LS change things up by throwing around some longer more punk songs with a unique start stop rolling bass sound. Both of these bands compliment each other very well. If you liked the Man In Shackles/Sewn Shut split EP then this is for you! Even if you haven't, check it out cuz it fucking rules! CF (Sodra Parkgatan 35a/214 22 Malmo/Sweden)

BG/IRON LUNG • split 7"

Yeah dog... this is awesome! I have never heard BG before, these kids rule the wasteland. Heavy dark metallic riffs, pummeling drums, low shouted vocals, and a thick sound. I wish this was longer though. What a tease! If heavy dark hardcore with a twist of crust is your thing, your palate will be satiated to the delights of BG. Iron Lung, all I need to say is that this two piece outfit from Reno destroys. I was lucky enough to catch these dudes sweating it out at Sabado Gigante in the Bay Area recently. Fast innovative and pissed. I think these guys were one of the best bands to play the fest. The drummer is a machine! He pounds the shit out of his drums, blasting super hard and fast. Don't let this EP pass you by. CF (\$4 to Born To Die/1904 NW 31 St./Oklahoma City, OK 73118)

OBSCENE GESTURE/ VARIANT MADARIAN • split CD

The sound of this CD snapping in my hands was the most enjoyable note it produced. Fans of anything will despise this piece of shit. MAH (Chicken Head Records/7483 Etiwanda/Reseda, CA 91335)

THE SUBURBAN KID/ THE SLINGSHOT IDOL • split 7"

This is a strange record. The Suburban Kid side is really raw and kind of low-fi, it starts off sounding kind of melodic and almost poppy, then the vocals kick in and sound like Todd from His Hero Is Gone. That took me by surprise, but the more I listen to it, HHIG is a good comparison because the other songs sound like that too. On the flip side is The Slingshot Idol whose sound varied as well. The first track is really catchy with a kind of surfy guitar line, then the second track sounds like a sloppier version of The Swing Kids. A weird record, but both bands seem to have a peculiar charisma. I'd be interested to hear them with a better recording. MO (Lilac Sky/Bergsligate 17/7018 Trondheim/Norway)

SURVIVORS/A NEW ENEMY • split CD

I will say this for this release, the packaging looks fucking great. As for the music, more proof that anyone can be in a band and put out a record. Survivors are from Jersey, I'd say the drum sound on this recording ruins it for me... well that and the vocals. Sorry guys, I'm not into the distorted vox with the delay. They cover a Rites of Spring song. A New Enemy has sort of a Dag Nasty feel to them, fast and melodic, yet still having an edge. I actually like this stuff... they also hail from NJ. NW (Warmachine Records; www.warmachinerecords.com)

MAN IS THE BASTARD NOISE/GERRIT • split 7"

Side A: This is what it would sound like if fax machines were conscious beings, and you had recorded them meditating. Uh, but seriously, it's a non-lateral mix of whizzing, buzzing, chirping, and white noise. It moves along nicely. Very interesting. Not typical of what I hear of Bastard Noise or other harsh noise acts. But then again, what's typical about noise anyway? Side B: Gerrit...?? Well, I personally haven't come across anything by this artist before, so this is my first impression. To tell you the truth it'll probably be the last time I deliberately listen to anything by Gerrit. However, to be fair, if you like repetitious and slightly chopped spoken samples, that have been processed and distorted, then you might be interested. Not my cup o' noise. MJ (Misanthropic Agenda/PO Box 667301/Houston, TX 7766)

THE LESSER BIRDS OF PARADISE/ JARED GRABB • Reading Light split CD

Jared Grabb is another one of those astoundingly popular solo acoustic acts that one can't help but trip over walking through the wake of the hardcore scene these days. Deadwood Divine was good because Tom had plenty of heart, but this just doesn't satisfy. Lesser Birds is more interesting, though it just reminds me of what we used to call "college rock" before those fuckers appropriated "emo." Indie pop with a nod to '80s pop; all those kids with the fancy hair and all the fashion accoutrements will go gaga. Besides the fact that this isn't obviously a major label release, I'm not sure what it has to do with hardcore. TS (Thinker Thought Records/1002 Devonshire Rd/Washington, IL 61571; www.thinkerthoughtwrong.com)

AHISMA/FUCK GOD IN THE FACE • split LP

When I listened to this it sounded oddly familiar, and I consulted a friend of mine. She said that she saw both of these bands play a few years ago, and that they were really good live. She also bought their demo CD, which I listened to a year earlier and didn't like. This record is either a re-recording of their demo or the demo on vinyl, but the stated recording date is 2002, and my friend got the demo in 2000. I don't know exactly what this is, but I've heard it before. Anyway, about the music... Maybe it's the mix or the sound quality but both these bands don't sound too hot. Also, Fuck God in the Face has some goofy lyrics in their first song and it sounds ridiculous: "mommy says 'is daddy home?' and baby says 'oullaloo ulaou' baby says 'oullaloo oulaoula' and mommy says 'I don't even know' freaking and streaking." Anyway, if you've ever seen these bands live and liked them; pick this one up for nostalgia, 'cause this copy's going directly to my friend's record collection. DJ (Will/Two Times Records/PO Box 10811/Eugene, OR 97440)

LYCANTHROPY/NENI UNIKU • split cassette

Both bands are from the Czech Republic, both play grindcore, but only one band is good. The Lycanthropy side is mediocre at best. The vocals are bad and mostly irritating. I couldn't listen to the whole side. Neni Uniku, on the other hand, is quite listenable. Most grind-hardcore bands I've heard from the Czech Republic have weird and goofy vocal parts in their songs; it's something funny, cool, and unique of bands from this area. Neni Uniku have some of that weirdness in their songs, but vocally, their strongest point is their two vocalists, especially their female singer, Petra. It's rare to hear female vocals in grind, so that makes this band extra special. Half of this tape is good, Czech it out if you like Czech grind... Ha! DJ (Insane Society Records; barvak@insanesociety.net)

CLANCY 6/VINCENT PRICE'S ORPHAN POWERED DEATH MACHINE • split 7"

No shortage of bands with terrible names this quarter; what's up with the kids? Anyway, Clancy 6 has a serious Combatwoundveteran-classic fixation, musically and lyrically. They do it well, though there's not much more to say. Vincent Price's Orphan Powered Death Machine do a weird lo-fi type of "modern" hardcore; something like early Black Cat 13 meets every bad screamo band you've ever heard. Pretty hard on these old ears, and I won't mourn the passing of this ill-conceived genre, but to paraphrase ol' Vincent himself, "You can't kill screamo because it's already dead." TS (McCarthyism/7209 25th Ave/Hyattsville, MD 20783-2752; www.mccarthysm.org)

BLACK EYES/EARLY HUMANS • split 7"

Experimental hardcore? I don't really know how to describe these bands, because I never really listen to these styles. I will say that the Black Eyes side is more catchy and danceable, where as the Early Humans side is a little more experimental. Not bad. CD (Planaria Recordings/PO Box 21340/Washington, DC 20009)

SHOCK TREATMENT/BOOTER • split 7"

HHhhh... There isn't much to say about this record... It's not good, by the way. MAH (Peste Et Cholera c/o Xavier Barbarit/23 Rue Des Lices/49100 Angers/France)

V/A • May All Be Free CD

A truly international compilation, this CD features classic sounding harsh punk and hardcore bands from all over. Most of them are fast punk bands that play music with a grinding or thrashing edge, though a couple are more melodic outfits and one band even had a ska song. As you move from track to track, the most major difference between bands becomes mere sound quality. The bands here are Boycott, Bramborak, Septic Tumor, Les Rezioues, Excreta, Strong Intention, Generation, Academy Morticians, En Tu Contra, Identistas, Hell On Earth, My Lai, Lead (II) Nitrate, Resist & Exist, Too Many Screaming Children, Malgobierno, Autonomia, One Reason, Five*O*Five, Nosecandy, Dr. Green, Dreadfabrik, Migra Violenta, Pizda Materna, Subtracttozero, Arz, Redention 911, and Stop The Presses. It is a really long comp, and since most of the bands play a similar style, you tend to lose track of exactly where you are as you read along in the thick booklet. Ah yes, the booklet: it is 'zine sized and full of information on the bands and the cause. The Angola Three are African-American prisoners trapped in the solitary confinement in the US prison system. Two were notorious Black Panther Party organizers accused of killing a guard, the other had been held since of the time of his arrival under investigation of the same guards death. All of whom have been in solitary confinement longer than many of us have been alive. Information about their situation, contact addresses for the prisoners and support networks, as well opinion pieces about the Angola Three can all be found in the booklet. LO (Throng Of Wym Records/Zachary Holochwost/PO Box 11577/Milwaukee, WI 53211)

V/A • Shake Them Haters Off CD

This is a sampler from Noise Maker!, a new label out of Wisconsin. Other than Code Orange (whose seven-inch I also got for review), the only other bands I've heard of on the roster here are Forstellla Ford and Seven Days of Samsara. A nice home-town feel with stuff ranging fairly far off the beaten path; quite a bit of silly stuff, too, including antics by IIfHadAHiFi, Skull Death, and hip-hop Atom wannabe, Juiceboxxxx. Apologetics and Fragments both play pop-charged punk; a bit of indie-infused hardcore by Members of the Yellow Press; a Hüsker Dü homage by Modern Machines; a more traditional hardcore approach by I Give Up; female-fronted pop hardcore from A Supreme and the Electric Mayhem; Panic Attacks and Pelvic Thrusts manage to sound something like the Germs meets the Tennessee-cum-Portland sound; and Leval Blessing are a straight-up hardcore take on black metal. My fave entry on this disc are Communist Conspiracy Rhythms, who I think it might be fair to say may be a little influenced by the (International) Noise Conspiracy—their offering even starts off with clapping; ironically enough, they blow the (I)NC away musically, somehow producing a garage-y hardcore sound that totally smokes. An interesting window on what the kids are up to in the Mid-West these days. TS (Noise Maker!/4023 N Bartlett Ave/Shorewood, WI 53211; www.noise-maker.com)

V/A • Drum Machine Madness 7"

The title of this 7" says it all. Fucking madness with drum machines! Imagine some huge mountain of a man running into your house, waking you out of bed, kicking the living shit out of you for about 5 minutes, then jumping out the window. That is what this record is like. Wadge starts shit off with death metalish absurdity, followed by Nemo, who have a Locust inspired sound to them. Solid solos and high pitched vocals are given by Pilgrim Fetus, while Alien Crucifixion go full force with some sort of mental disorder. The most well known out of the bunch, Agoraphobic Nosebleed ends the show with one man dementia. Jesus Christ this thing... MAH (Robotic Empire/Aintree Ln/Reston, VA 20191)

V/A • Stab To Kill Volume One CD

This might seem like one of those label samplers where most of the songs are from their full length releases, but thirteen of the fifteen tracks are actually new releases and not available on other release (at the moment). The line up features bands from the Boston/East Coast region (mostly); Think I Care, R'N'R, Close Call, Bottom Line, As They Fall, Some Kind of Hate, Say Goodbye, The Prowl, The Smut Peddlers, Tommy And The Terrors, Fit For Abuse, The A Team, Glory Fades, Knife Fight, and Mental. A nice collection of some of the newer hardcore bands from the region, and for the most part all of the songs are decent. KM (Stab And Kill Records/PO Box 52084/Boston, MA 02205)

V/A • The Path Of Compassion: An Animal Rights Benefit CD

Thirteen tracks from the following bands: Maroon, Risen, Absone, From The Dying Sky, Ten Times Over, Confronto, Kombat, New Winds, Another Victim, Rise Over Run, Nueva Eica, Renewal and Everlast. There is quite a bit of info on this CD about vegetarianism and veganism which is cool. However, there isn't much written about the bands (who seem to be from all over the world) and there are no lyrics. It tells you to go to the website for info and lyrics which I did, but I was too dumb to find it or maybe they really aren't there. Anywho, the music on here is my favorite genre, mosh metal, with the exception of Rise Over Run who do poppy punk. I would have really liked to see their lyrics as I'm very curious of how a song titled "Bert And Ernie Are Dead" relates to the cause of veganism. No such luck, though. Oh, at least I got to mosh around in my underpants. MH (www.xcatylstx.com or PO Box 60241/Indianapolis, IN 46230-0241)

V/A • Clepunk Comp Volume One CD

28 songs by 24 punk/hardcore bands. This CD has new and unreleased tracks by Vacancies, Disengage, The Unknown, Allergic to Whores, and 20 other bands. There are a couple of good songs on this compilation, but most of the other songs aren't memorable at all. CU (Smog Veil Records/316 California Ave. #207/Reno, NV 89509)

V/A • Finding a Voice : A Benefit for Humans CD

A cool totally huge collection of bands that benefit a worthy cause. Money from this CD goes to the People First Organization which is a movement run by people with developmental disabilities. A ton of bands are included, with standouts being The Dread, The Sputnicks, and The End. JG (Repetitively Futile Records/PO Box 1311/Missoula, MT 59806)

V/A • Sabotage 2001 CD

Jerk Off Records brings you a compilation of Japanese bands that cover a spectrum of melodic, snotty, gritty, and wacky punk rock. Each of the bands on here is very much punk in the classic style, though there are differences that make each track a bit of something different. Traitor-43 goes for snotty punk rock, while The Resisted plays a wacky rock and roll sound. Both Melodies and Persevere give you gritty punk rock with a crazy thrash tempo. If you want uppity punk with catchy guitar parts and choruses, then The Addiction, 2nd Degree, and The Last Survivors will satisfy you. I thought the best song on here come from Order. Their use of driving melodies wrapped in edgy punk rock is just great. The booklet for this CD comes with a page of information from each band. LO (Jerk Off Records/2031-1-15-20 Kishinosato Higashi/Nishumatri-Ku/557-0042 Osaka/Japan)

V/A • Reason To Believe CD

Reason To Believe is a 14 band, 21 track compilation that benefits a free DIY punk 'zine in the U.K. Some of the tracks have already been released, and some are exclusive to this CD. Thrashy hardcore, crusty punk, and a good cause. Some of the bands who contribute a track or two (or three or four) are Seein' Red, Crispus Attucks, E-150, and HHHH. This is a benefit, so be nice and buy it. MAH (Flat Earth Records/145-149 Cardigan Road/Leeds/LS6 1LJ/UK)

DEMOS

THE CRIMSON SPECTRE • demo

The Crimson Spectre's demo is a nine song fury ride that speeds along the rails of raw punk rock and boiling thrash. Books Lie, R.A.M.B.O., Balance Of Terror, and Hail Mary all come to mind when listening to this. Well written and, for the most part, political lyrics. Good stuff. MAH (PO Box 10093/Greensboro, NC 27404)

BEAUMONT HAMEL • Victory Lies In The Ashes Of Our... CD demo

Six songs to document the short life of this band. Beaumont Hamel plays emotional and chaotic mid-'90s hardcore with a very raw tone. The songs have a lot of screeching vocal work and crashing cymbals, so much of their stuff sounds really brassy. They take on personal issues and ideas about the scene in their lyrics, which fit well with the style they are delivered in. I liked the flood of rough energy and emotion in these songs. You can download this demo from their web site. LO (www.beaumonthamel.cjb.et)

PACK OF VIPERS • demo

Routine screamo-metal without a pulse. Waste of a good band name. MM (packofvipers@yahoo.com)

HYPATIA • demo

Start out with some thrash ranging from mid-tempo to blast beat speed, throw in some melodic bits and a bit of mosh and mix thoroughly. This is the recipe for Hypatia. It's solid for the most part, some of the melodic parts are a bit over the top and at times the transitions from fast to slow are a bit forced. Overall it's pretty good though, the recording quality could be a bit better though. BH (781 F Brookside Rd./Allentown, PA 18106)

THIS SCARES ME • demo

Yes! This is the kinda thing that keeps me doing reviews, getting a demo by a new band as exciting as This Scares Me. Imagine the bass playing of The Great Unraveling meets the guitar work and song-writing of Palatka topped with great hoarse and scratchy female vocals. Really original sounding stuff, very passionate and desperate. Lyrics here are just icing on the cake: incredibly well-written personal experiences of some tough things the author has faced in this culture, though I don't want to be so presumptuous as to offer my interpretations. Last but not least, the packaging is absolutely gorgeous with hand lithographing, silk-screening, spray-painting, and sewing. Out on tour in June and August, so catch them if you can. TS (\$5 ppd to: This Scares Me/853 Reese St/Athens, GA 30606; scott@fendforyourself.com)

OTESANEK • demo

Heavy doom. Slow grooving doom. Rad Cthulu pictures making a tape of dual vocalled doom core all the better. Pretty brutal and punishing. Doom doom doom. One of the singers used to do *Don't Feed the Bears* vegan cookzine (mmm, yummy) so you know these guys are down. CF (\$2 to Brad/4833 Walton Ave./Philadelphia, PA 19143)

HOLLOWED OUT • demo

There are seven songs here; most of them short bursts of energy and noise that some consider screamo. A member of this project is also in TR (a.k.a. Totally Ridiculous) and there are some definite similarities here. More than anything, Hollowed Out is just uncontainable. All their sounds fly by, an apparent train wreck of the instruments and people. Some of the stuff is here is pretty decent, and might be downright enjoyable separated out on its own (and with a better recording). LO (Vince Klopfenstein/406 W Emerson St./Bloomington, IL 61701)

ASS O'GORE • Chemical Valley Stench Core demo

Ass O'Gore spends their time playing crust punk and decrying the system with lines like: "Anal fist the system because it is anal fisting you." In fact, their politically relevant and socially conscious lyrics were pretty entertaining overall. The music here is pretty rough around the edges. It plays loud and hard, but doesn't have many interesting hooks. They seem to be more interested in creating a wall of noise for the vocals to mold into parts. Since the vocals are growling most of the time, that doesn't always happen. What does always happen is pure punk, and that is always respected. Unfortunately for Ass O'Gore the most memorable songs here are the Amexib and Body Count demos. LO (\$3 to Stuart Morris/148 London St./Peterborough, ON/K9H 2Y5/Canada)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT • Do Damage demo

Eight tracks of high energy fast hardcore from this new Minneapolis, MN hardcore band that features Felix Havoc formerly of Code 13 on vocals. The sound is straight forward hardcore, but it is well done with solid song writing, catchy vocals, and songs that don't let you down. I am sure this will turn into a 7" at some point. A very enjoyable demo, which I give two thumbs up. KM (PO Box 8585/Minneapolis, MN 55408)

TOO MANY SCREAMING CHILDREN • Escape From... demo

Ummm.... Okay, if your band is going to put out a demo CD, you should have at least one good song on it. T.M.S.C. do not, by any means, follow this rule. I don't even think there is a good part on this entire recording, except maybe for some of the sound clips, which come in abundance and are recorded 100 times better than the music. This CD plays like a horrible compilation, jumping from grindy crust to crusty grind, but never to anything resembling good music. The cover has a picture of an alien fucking Jesus on a cross, but that was to little/too late to save this bastard. MAH (Robbie/522 Linwood Ave. #F/Monrovia, CA 93305)

LIFE OUT OF BALANCE • CD demo

I like this set of four songs. They have a good sense of urgency and a lot of oomph to them. Life Out Of Balance plays a very modern style of hardcore that reminds me of Song Of Zarathustra, Orchid, and Party Of Helicopters. Elements of chaotic hardcore show up in the intricate guitar work and crashing noise, while the vocals give it a strong emo vibe. The demo comes packaged in a paper bag sleeve that tries to fool you into thinking it is a 7". LO (lifeoutofbalance@hotmail.com)

WAR SQUAD • Aaaahhh! demo

War Squad plays a furious classic hardcore sound with a snotty and frantic edge. There are a number of covers from '80s hardcore bands on here, which tend to fit well into the War Squad style. Their songs are all punchy and energetic, with fitting lyrics of frustration and complaint. LO (\$2 to Ryan/867 Bridle Ln./Webster, NY 14580)

GODS AMONG MEN • demo

There seems to be a desire to really stretch out and experiment here, but I'm afraid this disc suffers from an unfortunate post-crust fascination with black metal. There is an attempt at "operatic" singing, but out of tune and off-time; intolerably so to my ears. There's also some cello at work here, but it doesn't really seem to add, so much as it detracts, from the music. There's a lot going on here, but it comes off as incoherent more than interesting. Male and female vocals; nice DIY packaging. For fans of Neurosis or the Melvins, maybe? Sorry to be so negative, but I just couldn't find much to latch onto here. TS (Justin/4009 16th Ave SW/Seattle, WA 98106; http://godsamongmen.net/)

FUNERAL SHOCK • demo

This doesn't sound like I was expecting. I was thinking charged hair or dreads, d-beat and chugging. Well this is pleasantly thrashy. I heard that some of these dudes are in other notable bands who also thrash. The other day me and my friends almost hit a puppy and I saw a woman who looked like an ape. CF (Dan/PO Box 3833/Redwood City, CA 94064)

FLICKERFLAME • Maxed Out demo

These guys sound like they are pissed, but still having a good time. Think Crudos, but not too hard, cause they aren't that good. I wouldn't buy this CD, but if someone burned me a copy, I wouldn't throw it away. MAH (10211 Oxfordshire Drive/Nokesville, VA 20181)

DRUGS OF FAITH • 2002 demo

These two songs explore the darkness. The music pushes directly into the blackness, with harsh tones, punishing drums, and heavy guitar work. Fittingly, the lyrics explore the personal experiences of the singer with a despairing slant. It is a heavy hitting style that fans of metal-hardcore would be interested in. LO (PMB #570/21010 Southbank St./Sterling, VA 20165)

ONE LAST CHANCE • CD demo

8 tracks. I'm not sure this is really a demo, but it sounds like one, so I decided to put it in this section. I think with a better sound this band could produce a pretty good record. The right degree of pissed-offness is certainly there. This reminds me of west coast bands like Countdown To Oblivion and Deathreath... who might not be from the west coast at all. I don't know. Don't remember. Who cares. You fucking Yankees, you're all the fucking same, anyway. Oh no, I'm channeling Chirac again. Anyway, what I meant to say was that One Last Chance plays it fast and thrashy. Enough potential here, no doubt. Comes in a nice Blockbuster DVD cover. Classy! MH (bigballaolc@yahoo.com)

DEAD RECKONING • demo

Dead Reckoning plays a classic sounding tough hardcore. A lot of their songs have a dirty rock feel, especially with the low toned vocals. The six songs here are a sampling of catchy anthems and straight up rockers. Many of them discuss crucial socio-political ideas in the lyrics. There is a strong sense of '80s hardcore in this set of songs; one of the songs even sounds like the Misfits. Dead Reckoning grew on me more and more with each listen. LO (\$2 to 5815 N Sheridan #603/Chicago, IL 60660)

DEAD END KIDS • Demo #1 demo

10 tracks including a 16 minute live set. How often do you get a demo by a band made up of 14 and 15 year olds? I really could be their mother. How strange is that! Anyway, musically this is pretty straightforward punk rock with a sound that is clean but very innocent. Like they have no idea yet how to make the guitar sound dirty and punk. But I don't want to be negative. At this age you have all sorts of ideas floating around in your head and you still have a very open road ahead of you. I hope these kids will use their heads and do something positive with their lives and music. Keep on rocking and having fun, kids! If I was their mom I'd be so proud! MH (Dek Fan Club/PO Box 33664/Seattle, WA 98133)

FOREVER YOUTH • CD demo

Forever Youth blasts out six fast anthems on this demo. The sound is crazy, thrashing, distorted, and full of ire. They play super fast music that is meant to be fun. They do two covers, Minor Threat and Inside Out, which help to break up the assault of noise with some familiar noise. Recorded in a basement, this set of songs is very raw. LO (www.foreveryouthmothafucka.com)

SHOVELFIGHT • Still Sinking the Fucker CD demo

The packaging looks really nice on this CDR demo, but I'm not all into the music. These guys hail from North Carolina, and seem to be playing melodic mid-paced to faster hardcore with lots of strange breaks and guitar noodles. Gets a little sloppy during the fast parts. To much going on here for this camper. I'm not really sure what they are trying to do musically. NW (RDC Records/PO Box 18753/Asheville, NC 28814)

A DAY IN BLACK AND WHITE • demo

The letter that came with this demo declared that this band has been compared to Converge and Majority Rule. I've never listened to either of those bands, so I will just tell that as I see it, it would seem ADIBAW are going for an overall "heavy" ambience, though these two tunes are quite dynamic, bouncing around between different levels of volume and intensity before the CD ends, which is pretty nice because the songs don't seem so monotonous or repetitive. However a weakness in this approach is that it feels that as soon as one of these songs starts to rock out, they drop the bottom out and do the dreamy guitar meandering thing. No lyric sheet, so I have no idea what ideas or emotions these folks are affected by enough to scream about. TS (Daniel Morse/950 24th St NW, Rm 411/Washington, DC 20037; http://adibaw.cjb.org)

VAN JOHNSON • CD demo

Van Johnson are Canucks who play music comparable to Neil Perry, Saetia, and You and I. This demo only has two songs, which is sorta of a downer, cause I would have been down with listening to more. They were all like "hey dude, here's two songs, see ya." and I was all like "dude, that's it?! I can't hear anymore?" They were already gone by then, back to play hockey or that shit where they sweep the rock around. If you are into the aforementioned bands, then you should check V.J. out. The packaging for this CD is handmade, and they include lyrics and song descriptions, which is top notch in my book. MAH (4 Finrod Court/Ottawa, ON/K2G 4M5/Canada)

INERTIE • demo

This one was a real surprise. Chris Mora of former French emo bands Fingerprint & Undone plays drums in this new band from Bordeaux, France. They do the Tragedy-style, and they are damn good at it. Seriously, this might be the best demo I have heard in a while. 5 songs of pure anger. This demo CD has a nice screen printed cover, and the lyrics come in English, Spanish and French. CU (Stonheenge Records/BP 46/33031 Bordeaux Cedex/France; inertie@oldschoolpunk.com)

GET KILLED • CD demo

Overall, the presentation of this CD is what's most impressive. It comes in a cardboard CD case that's been silk-screened in two colors and hand numbered. The screened artwork is cool and excellently done, as is the lyric book. Get Killed, from Providence, Rhode Island, play thrashed-out hardcore similar to Haymaker or Hawg Jaw. The CD is a demo, so the recording quality isn't so good. Sometimes it's hard to hear the vocals amidst the chaotic noise, and it's hard to tell what's going on. The lyrics are pretty good: angry and harsh. I especially like the song about cokeheads using their razors to slash their wrists. This band has a lot of energy though, and I'm sure that once they record a studio album, it will rock. DJ (getkilled@lycos.com)

TENDER LOVE/TACTICAL ERADICATION FUNCTION • demo

Okay, I can't really decipher the differences between these two bands, but wow, this shit fucking amazed me. This is a brutal wall of complete noise. Sounds like I'm at some bizarre construction job that I might enjoy due to the sound environment heavy fucking shit for noise fans. I don't know much about this style of music, but it appeals to me. I'd love to hear more. Layers and layers of fucking noise... ARGHHH!!!!!! NW (Inner Space/1451 N Peach #171/Fresno, CA 93727)

FUCK THIS • demo

Three grindcore songs from Fuck This... They are all metal guitar assaults with unintelligible and growling vocals, played to a power violence beat. Fuck This are heavy all around. Each of the songs seems to have the same slow (and borderline sludgy) breakdown that comes in right before the song ends. A fine demo, but not exactly MITB. LO (PO Box 40333/Denver, CO 80204)

HUMANS THE SIZE OF MICROPHONES • demo

Chaotic thrashy hardcore. Screamed political vocals that at times, mostly during the slower bits, started to remind me of Clifford from Blast. There's also some backing vocals that are of the "demon out of hell" variety. For the most part things worked well but there a few points where the herky-jerky aspect got a bit out of control for my tastes. This guitar sound is a bit muddy as well. These complaints aside this is definitely worth checking out. BH (Land of Treason/PO Box 2454/Dorchester, Dorset/DT2 8YT/UK)

EXOSUS • demo

Self-avowed metal-influenced HC by ex-members of Crispus Attacks. A fair amount of diversity among these five songs. Personally I think their sound works best on the more melodic parts, and works least on the more grind-influenced parts. Suitable for fans of Born Against to those of Catharsis; most places in between, as well. The lyrics are better than average. First track advocates the shaking off of Christian missionaries within punk and hardcore; the last track is a scathing and bloody critique of the diamond trade. The stuff in between is more personal, struggling, pain, etc., so beloved in the mid-'90s. A fair recording job, the packaging is well done and DIY, though I could do without the "brutality-porn." Keep an eye out. TS (Allen Exosus/3410 Wilkens Ave/Baltimore, MD 21229)

ON THE ATTACK • demo

This is what Left For Dead would sound like if they didn't rule. The eighth track ends with a pretty sweet guitar part, but the rest leaves a sour taste in my mouth. MAH (680 Murphy Ave./Atlanta, GA 30310)

ARMY OF NONE • CD demo

I don't know, this is really boring metallic hardcore with pretty cool political lyrics played by people who seem like they are pretty sincere. They want one dollar for this CDR, so if you REALLY like moshy metalcore you might like this. Maybe over time these guys will get a little better. I just feel like this was a little premature. AH (Mike Yarrish/216 High Ridge Ave./Ridgefield, CT 06877)

CHESTERFIELD • CD demo

Chesterfield has a few different things going on. The strongest element is the vocals. A mix of scratchy vocals and sweetly harmonious vocals delivered in an honest acoustic style take on each song. They are accompanied by a plain guitar and a strong cello. The last song is a spoken word/poetry piece on the state of the US post 9-11; it shows some good analytical thinking. A couple of the songs kept skipping, so I couldn't really listen to the whole thing. You can download these songs and even print out their booklet from the web site. LO (www.angelfire.com/poetry/chesterfield/)

LEBENDEN TOTEN • demo

Noisy and distorted raw punk. Not for the faint or light hearted (or those with migraine problems to say the least). If you like your punk like Disorders early stuff this is your tape. Social lyrics and a wall of noise, what else needs to be said? How about this band features ex and current members of Atrocious Madness... CF (PO Box 40113/Portland, OR 97240)

BLACKEN THE SKIES • demo

Oh great! Another lame third rate His Hero is Gone. Just what the world doesn't need. MM (xtreasonx@hotmail.com)

JET PROPELLED PHOTOGRAPHS • demo

Angular and dissonant, with a thick and warm bass undercurrent, this competent Italian instrumental unit does what Tristeza tried to do, only better and with teeth. Three people, two songs, one attractive DIY sleeve. Not something I'd be likely to hold on to, but then again, instrumental music rarely holds much of my attention for very long. TS (jetpropelledphotographs@yahoo.no)

THE APOLLO PROGRAM • CD demo

The Apollo Program plays a certain kind of hook-driven emotive music not unlike that of contemporaries, Amanda Woodward, though with a distinctly more indie-rock influence. Some of the leads and riffs on this actually sound directly inspired by Amanda Woodward. The lyrics are sung in English, which seems unfortunate as I think French is much more suited to this kind of music. However, much of the lyrical content for these four songs is surprisingly nuanced and challenging—thoughts on globalization, the political implications of identifying as adults, and the hours of our lives wasted as production units in the capitalist rat-race. Though I'm not so keen on the rather high-pitched (to my ears) vocals, and I feel that much of the music comes just short of fully rocking out, for the most part, this is some really great modern emo-ish hardcore, solidly in the French tradition of the last decade or so. For a demo this is incredibly well-done, all aspects of the production are polished enough and feel so well thought out that I thought this was a full release until I noticed the disc was a CDR; musically and artistically, this seems to come together really well for what it is, though what it is doesn't always hold my attention. Despite the short-comings, I would recommend this to fans of Amanda Woodward, Forstella Ford, Vanilla, Yage, Yaphet Kotto, Envy, and There Is a Light that Never Goes Out, and I will be interested in checking out future releases by The Apollo Program. TS (Apollo Program/c/o Lemiere Greg/18, Rue de Bretagne/14000 Caen/France)

SPACE TO BEING • Mosh it Up demo

These guys are from the Czech Republic. Fifteen songs of hardcore-powerviolence with dual vox... one screamy kinda like The Killers, the other just straight up monotone. So three songs into this and Mark McCoy comes running into my room, moshing and throwing shit around. I wrestle the fucker to the ground, and slap him silly to see what's up. He tells me he can't believe someone's covering a song from his old band Charles Bronson. Amongst this they cover an Infest tune.. You can see where this is going, yep... the garbage. Sorry bros. NW (spacetobeing@seznam.cz)

GET IT AWAY • demo

Old school fast hc in the vein of DRI and Infest, with some moshy breakdowns to keep you kicking your friends in the face. 4 songs about drinking, society, meat eating, and the bride of Frankenstein. I don't mind generic music, but at least sing something meaningful. But other than that complaint, this is a good demo. CD (no address)

FULL EFFECT • demo

I'm done excusing people, this crap has got to stop... what the fuck are people thinking? What the fuck are they doing? What the fuck are they listening too? I hope for all of our sakes not this. Crappy moshy stuff with screamo influences. Have I mentioned lately that I hate music? Thirteen songs from Italy. NW (Via Molinella 85/31050 Provegliano TV/Italy)

FECES FOR WARPAINT • You Can't Polish A Turd CD demo

I thought I was going to regret putting this compact disc anywhere near a workable stereo. I mean, with a name like Feces For Warpaint, you have to assume that your in store for some horrible shit. This demo CD is a fine example to why you're never supposed to make assumptions. Feces For Warpaint (despite the horrible name) play some pretty savage and thick music. If a bunch of Greensboro punx tricked the singer of Eyehategod to be in their band, then I think it would sound a little something like this. And now that I think about it, that might not be so hard... Just put some cigarettes and heroin outside your house under a box, prop it up with a stick... never mind. Dense and throaty vocals, impressive solos, and a song called "Hearing Is For The Rich." This isn't stoner metal, but you can definitely get stoned. MAH (1804 Spring Grdn St/Greensboro, NC 27403)

THE DICTIONARY OF CUT UP HANDS • The Smartest Thing... demo

Okay, I am going to take a guess at how this demo was born. A kid graduates from a two year art school. For the accomplishment, his aunt and uncle give him a Best Buy gift card. Using the gift card, he purchases a laptop and DJ Shadow CD. Using said laptop, and insperato from the CD, he begins to assemble flaky, 8-bit songs. None of which have any real flow or substance, and are almost as awkward as dry humping someone without kissing them. I guess artists like The Wind Up Bird and Askeleton made it okay for anyone to bring this sort of project into the punk scene, but when it comes down to it, some laptops would be put to better use playing minesweeper on. MAH (consopolus@aol.com)

THE FIRST CUT IS THE DEEPEST • demo

This is a five song, thirteen minute homemade demo from The First Cut Is The Deepest. I don't know where this band comes from or where you'll be able to find this demo—they'll sell them through the mail, I'm guessing. To describe this outfit's music is not an easy task. Over the course of these five songs The First Cut Is The Deepest run the gamut in musical style from slower, melodic and artistic hardcore to fast, chaotic noise with vocals coming from someone sounding like he had his throat shredded with broken glass. Some near-powerviolence breakdowns are thrown into the mix, as is a "hidden" acoustic instrumental piece at the end (I'd describe it as Metallica-esque). This demo takes off in the fourth and fifth tracks, but it is burdened with a stylistic ambiguity that I feel weakens the band's potential power. These people are obviously talented musicians, but I think their sound could be more focused, more consistent and directed, while still maintaining something "new." PM (freethedeath@hotmail.com)

FUCKED UP KIDS • demo

Low fi punk that's mostly mid-tempo. Fitting for a basement show amongst friends. Other than that nothing to write home about. Sounds like they're having fun. Nothing wrong with that. MH (PO Box 21530/1850Commercial Dr/Vancouver, BC/V5N 4A5/Canada)

WHEEL OF DHARMA • demo

WOD started out in the early '90s as the first Russian straight edge hardcore band ever, and had an important part in the early days of the Russian hardcore scene. In 2000 members of the band moved to Finland, and somehow they managed to keep the band alive. The band covers political issues such as the war in Chechnya, and the contemporary situation in Russia. This CD comes with a thick booklet with translations, and my copy even has a nice silk screened fabric envelope. Too bad my copy doesn't play. CU (\$5ppd to Punch/Pyynikintori 8A3/33230 Tampere/Finland; punchmira@hotmail.com)

VIDEOS & DVDs

V/A • Michigan Fest 2002 DVD

Filmed with multiple camera angles and good enough audio, watching this DVD is a lot like being at last year's Michigan Fest. There is one song from each band, as well as short interviews with band members and scenesters who attended. Plus, the special effects and graphics are top notch. Scenes fade in and out, the editing is well done, and the gathering is really well documented. Bands on here include Milemarker, !!!, Aloha, Coalesce, Dillinger 4, Isis, Arab On Radar, Small Brown Bike, Planes Mistaken For Stars, Casket Lottery, Hot Snakes, Radio 4, Oxes, Rye Coalition, Hey Mercedes, and Ted Leo/The Pharmacists. There are over 30 bands on here, and they all get a full song's worth of coverage. I wouldn't really suggest buying this unless you were into more than half of the bands on here, since a lot of it is the same thing. Honestly, I don't know how many times you can really watch band videos, but people always seem into them. Unlike many, the Michigan Fest 2002 DVD is really well done and worth the asking price. LO (BiFocal Media)

LOST FILM FEST • VHS cassettes Vol.I+II

Just like punk music, punk movies vary greatly in quality. You get some amazing and awe-inspiring work here and some not so great stuff. A lot more of the good than the bad, though, so let me assure you that these tapes and the Lost Film Collective in general is definitely worth checking out. Some of the standout material on here is: "Anarchy in LA," a short documentary about the anarchist movement, which looks very clean, almost slick. Nevertheless, it manages to get the information across in quite a poignant manner. It is "Crowd Bites Wolf" however, which deals with the anti-WTO protest in Prague a few years back, that finds a form that fits the anarchist movement much better. It is funny and intelligent, with great camera work and even greater editing. The whole thing is just so stylish and cool, I never wanted it to end. Tape II has some great stuff, too. My personal favorite here was the "Sean Connery Golf Project" in which two people sneak into an office on the Sony lot in LA, steal a screenplay which is in development for Sean Connery, decide it's not very good, re-write portions of it and then put it back where they found it. Watching the two sneak around the Sony building and tip-toe down the corridors into various offices is just totally priceless. Just as funny and probably a lot more important on a political level is "The Horribly Stupid Stunt Which Has Resulted In His Untimely Death." It's a doc about some members of the Yes Men Group which manage to get themselves invited to a seminar in Austria where one of them gives a speech posing as a member of the WTO. Watching this impostor speak at a meeting in front of all these dumb fucks is one of the funniest things I've ever seen. It's that kind of funny, where you find yourself covering your eyes because you can no longer stand to look at the screen. It's totally cringe-worthy half the time, but you just keep watching in amazement. The absolute highlight is the guy's explanation of why KLM airlines doesn't want to merge with Alitalia; what he's saying, basically, is that the Italians have no work ethic and spend half the day taking naps. No-one in the room seem to find anything wrong with that little bit of info. There is some good animation stuff on the tapes, too, so again, I encourage you to seek this out. MH (Bloodlink Records/4434 Ludlow St./Philadelphia, PA 19104)



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TOP 10 LISTS

Mark McCoy

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Nate Wilson

THE RITES—advance of the new 12" • V/A—Menneskelig Stench Vol. 2 7" • TORRINGTON—demo • RUNNAMUCKS—On the Brink LP • NIHILISTICS—LP re-release • HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE—Patmos or Bust 7" • THE SHEMPS—16 song CDR • YOUTH ATTACK—7" • GIANT HAYSTACKS—7" • TOTAL FURY—Committed to the Core 10" (what a ripper... literally)

Jonathan Lee

Kickball every Sunday at Overton Park 2pm • PLEASE INFORM THE CAPTAIN THIS IS A HIJACK—LP • CRUDE—LP • ISIS—Oceanic 2xLP • FORMER MEMBERS OF ALFONSIN/BREAD AND CIRCUITS—LP • YAPHET KOTTO—live and new recordings • CALVARY—live • GUYANA PUNCH LINE—live and new recordings • TRUE NORTH—Put Your Nightlife Where Your Mouth Is LP • the over 500 who came for the Anti-War March in Memphis

Scott Torguson

SAGE FRANCIS—The Makeshift Patriot 7"/live • BUCK 65—Sqaure CD/live • City of God (the movie) • JOHNNY CASH—the video for "Hurt" • CALVARY—Outnumbered is Outflanked LP • C.R. AVERY—Disclosure CD demo • baseball season starting • THE ROOTS—Phrenology LP • LOOSE FUR—LP • KARATE—Concerto al Barchessone Vecchio CD

Marianne Hofstetter

CRUSH MY CALM—advance CD • RAEIN—advance CD • PLEASE INFORM THE CAPTAIN THIS IS A HIGHJACK—LP • THE PROM—Under The Same Stars CD and live • LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN—all • THE BOOK OF DEAD NAMES—LP • AMANDA WOODWARD—Ultramort CD • PETROGRAD—Nineoneone LP • KazAa • My So-Called Life DVD Box

Matt Average

DEAD BODIES EVERYWHERE—Buy A Bullet Rent A Gun CD • BG/IRON LUNG—split EP • BURY THE LIVING—everything • HELLFISH AND PRODUCER—Bastard Sonz Of Rave CD • SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS—Swedish Hardcore Must Die! LP • VENETIAN SNARES—anything • ETAE—s/t EP • SWELL MAPS—anything • HEAD HITS CONCRETE—Hope, Fear, and the Terror of Dreams EP • TOXIC REASONS—Independence LP

Chuck Franco

BLACK UNIFORMS SPLATTER—Punks on Acid LP • BG/IRON LUNG split 7" • SABADO GIGANTE FEST • SUN RA—Greatest Hits CD • FEAST OR FAMINE/SOCIAL OUTCAST—split LP • MAN IN SHACKLES/LAST SECURITY EP • My hopes and dreams lost in the bottom of a bottle (ha!) • getting fired • getting fired and being able to skate more • all my friends who hang out in ditches, break their skulls and wrists, drink cement, puke on my shoes, smoke out with me, get beat by cops, and basically fuck 'shit up on a regular basis (names withheld to protect the guilty)

Chris Crass

A New World In Our Hearts: Eight Years of Writings from the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation edited by Roy San Filippo • Men's Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears Our Lives Apart by Paul Kivel • Shutting down the financial district of SF with Direct Action to Stop the War—actagainstawar.org • Settlers of Cataan boardgame • Confronting Fascism: discussion documents for a militant movement • Dispatches from Durban by Eric Mann • The indymedia of Food Not Bombs fnbnews.org • ActiveSolidarity.net web resource for anti-racism and movement building • JackAss the movie and Frida • NorthEastern Anarchist issue #6

Timothy Sheehan

PLEASE INFORM THE CAPTAIN THIS IS A HIJACK—LP • SEEIN' RED split 10" with SHIKARI • BREAD & CIRCUITS/ (FORMER MEMBERS OF) ALFONSIN—12" • THIS SCARES ME—demo CDR • SHIVERING—To the Ground 10" • INTENSITY split 7" with ANTICHRIST • PISTOLS AT DUSK—demo mp3s • DEL CIELO/KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS—7"

Ravi Grover

the 10,000 Chicagoans who shut down Lakeshore Drive to protest the madman George W. Bush • Get busy single—SEAN PAUL • Orlando lecture by Gurinder Chadha, director of UK film Bend it Like Beckham • Requiem for a Dream • Knock Knock single—GZA • Southern Fried Funk tape—KILARA • www.internationalterrorist.com • reading in the news that Michael Moore is going to release a documentary titled Fahrenheit 911 which reveals oil ties between the Bush and bin Laden families • WAFFLE HOUSE RIOTERS/MEPHOTIS 1995 split demo • www.whitehouse.gov—White House website spoof, check it out!

Vincent Chung

BLACK EYES • Curtis Mayfield—Curtis • Old Dirty Bastard—Return to the 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version • DILLINGER FOUR—live on St. Patrick's Day • This Heat—Peel Sessions • Hang on the Box 'Di Di Di' • N.E.R.D.—In Search of... • Better Luck Tomorrow film • luckymountain.com • Leffe Blonde

Lisa Oglesby

V/A—Decide On Change LP • BREAD & CIRCUITS/FORMER MEMBERS OF ALFONSIN—split LP • PLEASE INFORM THE CAPTAIN THIS IS A HIJACK—LP • FIRE DOWN BELOW—G 7" • Chickenhead 'Zine And Roll #5 • KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS/DEL CIELO—split 7" • Great songs from great records I reviewed this issue: "Made With Pride" by BURY THE LIVING, "Resist Reside" by THE CINEMA EYE, "She's A Powderkeg" by BURN YOUR BRIDGES, "Fake Boys" by THE ROBOCOP KRAUS, "The Trails" by CHARM CITY SUICIDES, and "Facial Disobedience" by RADON

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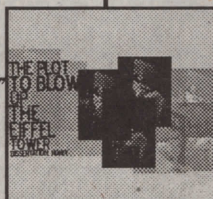


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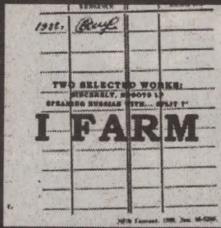
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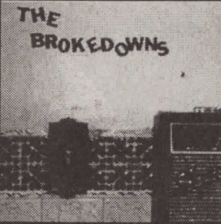
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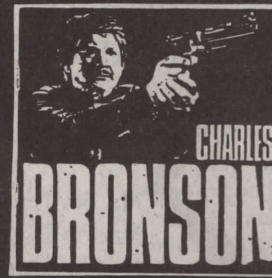
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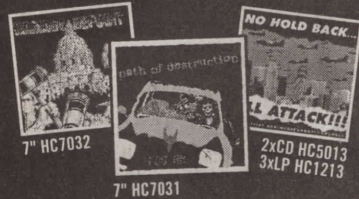
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HARDCORE COMMUNIQUE #2:

Christophe Mora has been a mover and a shaker in the French hardcore scene since the early '90s running his distrolabel Stonehenge and playing in Fingerprint, Jasemine, and Undone. I've always been a fan of both Christophe's musical endeavors and Stonehenge's releases, and was ultimately inspired to undertake this interview after the Stonehenge site began sporting a logo that boldly declares, "anarcho-emo-punk." As an anarchist and an emo-hardcore kid, I felt compelled to initiate a dialogue. Here follows the results:

Interview by Timothy Sheehan

HaC: There seems to me, in the US hardcore/punk scene today, a conspicuous absence of challenging political discourse; most of the "better" politics and analyses held by members of our milieu still only amount to wishy-washy liberalism/reformism. Many a newsprint-stained page was wasted during the 2000 presidential diversion anxiously touting the importance of Nader and the U.S. Green Party. And even though I am vegan and straightedge, I find discussions of these principles to be tedious beyond tolerance. Ultimately, like so many other fetishized roles within punk, activistianity is the default religion.

Political imagination is in short supply, though we are not without a few islands of relief: Rambo's to-the-point and humorous take on anarchism; the complex and broad analysis of Please Inform the Captain This Is a Hijack; and the passionate (some would say overly) expression and post-left tendencies of the CrimethInc/Harbinger/Huntergatherer publications.

The substance of what I'm getting at here is that I feel isolated by the banal ideologies and weak analysis of so much that is U.S. punk; so much so that I want to call this a caucus rather than an interview. However, I came to anarchism through hardcore, and continue to see its realized value and unrealized possibilities, and therefore am not willing to leave it behind.

This interview is part of a campaign I've begun towards making explicit and articulate anarchism, and therefore myself, visible in my formative culture, specifically through emphasizing and revealing the inherent anarchic nature and heritage of hardcore/punk.

I'm not sure if it just seems to be the case to an outsider, but Europe's punk scene has always seemed much more explicitly and consciously anarchist in orientation. Perhaps this is due to a different experience of class in Europe?

Obviously the material conditions of life for U.S. hardcore/punk kids, especially so with a majority coming from comfortable middle-class backgrounds, insulate us from many of the radicalizing realities of this world; our media also seems to hold a sickening stranglehold on the understanding of denizens of the U.S., a perfect illustration being the Why Do They Hate Us? Syndrome.

France itself has such a long and amazing legacy of revolution and revolutionaries, a bare minimum of the highlights of which would include: The revolts of 1648, the Revolution of 1787-1799, Proudhon, the Commune of 1871, Debord, Vaneigem, the events of May '68, and the apple-dumping anti-globalization actions of the last few years.



Granted, not all of these examples are anarchist, but French history does, at the very least, seem dense with resistance. How does any of this figure into the psyche of any given French person in this day and age? The political inclinations of a hardcore/punk kid?

Cristophe: I would like to start off by saying that I have the feeling that you are underestimating somewhat the presence of positive anarchist perspectives in the North American/U.S. punk/hardcore scene of today. Profane Existence always tried to bring together punk and active anarchist resistance and solidarity. I might agree that this is not always in-dept political stuff that can be found in their

pages, but not mentioning them seems to me like a strange thing. There are also a bunch of bands/zines/labels that I totally associate with positive anarchist perspective, like Tragedy, Submission Hold, Aus-Rotten, Tribal War, Resist & Exist, and Contravene.

I don't know; I basically think that the difference here in Europe is that maybe "scenes" tend to mix a bit more. For example, the French "emo" scene of the early '90s was totally linked with the anarcho-punk scene. I'm not saying it is totally perfect and harmonious here, but from what I can see, I would say that to a certain point, the hardcore and anarcho-punk scenes managed to stay connected each with other, sharing a lot of common goals, and not feeling too uncomfortable with their differences and specifics. Of course, this is changing quite a bit these days, but there are still a lot of links that can clearly be seen, and it is still common to see "emo" and regular hardcore bands playing in anarcho-punk squats, sharing the bill with crust-punk bands.

Now, to be honest, I'm not convinced that the French history of "resistance" is something that is actually bringing any kind of "special" enlightenment in any given French kid's perception of the world. Maybe some French have feel that France is kind of a "special" place because of its history, but I'm quite sure most of the French kids just don't have much more perspective on the radical history here than any other kid elsewhere. The French Revolution is something that we of course learn about, and that has a good place in our lesson books, but I

have the impression that this is just the historical aspect that is focused on. I can't remember of any in-depth radical teaching or perspective. This is just the *image* of the revolution that seems to count. But, I really don't believe that beyond these images, we're supposed to get any sense of how the structures of power and oppression are built up and should be opposed. In this sense, even if the contexts are different, I would say that French kids are built up to be submissive to the system, just like anywhere else.

HaC: I suppose I was a bit cursory in my naming of "bright spots" on the US anarcho-punk horizon; and I don't dispute whatever anarchist tendencies you're attributing to the other projects, but the reason I didn't list them is that, Tragedy and Submission Hold aside, the rest are sort of

French Anarcho-Emo-Punk

relegated to the “crusty” scene here, and don’t really have much of a *broad appeal* to the rest of hardcore/punk in the US. In fact, it’s almost a stereotype here that those who identify with the “crusty” aesthetic are anarchists, whatever they do or do not believe; on the other hand, those identifying as political hardcore kids’ politics almost always end up toeing the left-liberal/activist party lines.

At least some of the reason for this would seem to be a function of what you are saying in regards to how the different factions of punk and hardcore are more *cohesive* in Europe than here in the United States. Sectarianism often seems really appealing in the sense of being able to draw distinctions between one’s point of view and what one sees as problematic in the other scenes, but isolation can also stunt the growth of one’s understanding, to say the least.

More of the point I’m trying to get at here is that I would like to create an articulate (and hopefully inspiring) representation of anarchism in the more general U.S./North American hardcore scene as a counterbalance to what I see as the “politics of despair” inherent in liberalism and activism, the reactionary nature of these ideologies. I want to *build something*, not just react to the current “crisis of the moment.” I’m also of the belief that punk and hardcore are inherently anarchistic in nature, with substantial debts to Situationism and other entities, such as the Red Army Faction. What’s your take on this notion? Also, what prompted you to recently begin identifying your label or the bands you are promoting and supporting explicitly with anarchism?

Christophe: Well, I was not saying that there were absolutely no separation between the anarcho-punk and the hardcore scenes here—I really don’t want you to have too much of a bright picture of what’s going on in Europe. But I think a good way to avoid too much separatism is by not being afraid to associate openly anarchist bands and scenes with less openly radical ones. The simple fact that you try to keep anarcho-punk out of the hardcore spectrum seems a bit weird for me. What got me into more punk stuff were bands like Born Against and this whole ABC No Rio scene, where communities were mixing up freely, and I’m glad that this scene managed to bring together Nausea fans and Turning Point fans. That’s actually one of the reasons why I decided to openly associate Stonehenge with anarchism, as an attempt to reconnect my musical community to something that I strongly consider as an important aspect of what I believe punk is all about. I felt like this whole early ‘90s thing where punk and hardcore were totally linked

together was kind of fading away, and I had the impression that there were less and less visibility for anarchist perspectives.

HaC: I hope you’re not misunderstanding me: I, being me personally, don’t necessarily seek to separate anarcho-punk (which, in the U.S., primarily manifests itself as the genre/aesthetic commonly known as “crust”) from the whole of U.S. hardcore; rather I am basing my commentary on observations of widespread tendencies within the U.S. hardcore/punk milieu to balkanize into five or so “distinct” flavors, each with their own aesthetics, values, and goals. While I don’t necessarily think this is a bad tendency, what is specifically problematic to me in this situation is that while everyone benefits from the inherent anarchist nature of DIY hardcore/punk, it is generally only consciously recognized by and identified with one group within punk; the “crusties.”

Seeing you explicitly associate Stonehenge with anarchism was the thing that inspired me to ask you to participate in this dialogue for the same reason you gave: “...an attempt to reconnect my musical community to something that I strongly consider as an important aspect of what I believe punk is all about.”

This actually leads me to another point I wanted to bring up, that being my hypothesis

“What we have to offer is maybe not as seducing as the lies the capitalists are selling us, it might not be an ultimate truth, and it might not apply to everybody. But that also doesn't mean it is shit that needs to stay unspoken.”

that DIY hardcore and punk provide at least one sort of living and working model of anarchism: on our local levels, we organize loosely along lines of affinity; on the global scale we organize as a network rather than a federation; there is free movement between locales; there is a certain type of mutual aid expressed in hospitality for strangers from other places when they visit, such as free food and shelter, and the likelihood of friendship; and that much of the way all of this happens is based on an economy of trust. Of course I am glossing over all the ugly problems endemic to our scene/community, but I think the generality of the comparison, in this case, is more important than the specifics. What do you think of this hypothesis?

Christophe: Oh no, I’m not misunderstanding you—don’t worry. I totally see your point and I totally agree with your hypothesis that DIY hardcore/punk is a solid and coherent basis to look to as an anarchist model in our daily lives, and to start working on deconstructing our Western capitalist/imperialist/patriarchal/heterosexist inheritance and heritage. I know that

a lot of jaded people are always trying to focus on the negative aspects of everything, so let me clearly state that I’m not saying that hardcore/punk is perfect here (or that it is the only place where such things are possible). I’m just acknowledging that in its very structure, and in the way we try to articulate our relations each with others, there is something that isn’t just as trivial as it might seem, or as some would like us to believe.

Just like you said, as punks we are daily practicing and sharing values like solidarity, instead of competition; and creativity, instead of blind acceptance, passivity and denial of our own potential. We are denying the values of money, hierarchy, power, success, and domination in our lives. We are trying to put together a global network of local communities that each work on their own level and are not trying to fight each others in order to force their views and be the strongest one.

A lot of people are trying to deny the fact that all these little things are actually totally coherent ways to question things and to try to act on certain levels; trying very hard to hide the link that exists between all this “punk” organization and a clear, consistent political message/behavior. I just don’t understand why, to be honest, because accepting this doesn’t imply that we might believe we are better people, or that we think punk is a perfect place (it is obviously not). Accepting this just doesn’t mean that we are arrogant, selfish, pretentious, intolerant people, and that we just

despise others. In fact, it seems to me that as much as we are trying to be vocal and caring, we are also totally honest about our compromises, our bad steps, our fears and our mistakes, and we are not trying to hide ourselves just to appear as totally cool, seductive people.

We have to realize that whatever power is lying in punk shouldn’t be lessened by guilt or confusion, because this is just what those in power want from us. What we have to offer is maybe not as seducing as the lies the capitalists are selling us, it might not be an ultimate truth, and it might not apply to everybody. But that also doesn’t mean it is shit that needs to stay unspoken. The simple idea that there exists one truth that could apply to just everyone—no matter their cultures, languages, desires, etc—is the biggest lie that Western culture is imposing on us, and the rest of the world. Should we buy it?

Today, punk is not about being openly vocal about this. Punk is still “political” in its message of course, but people are basically denying the fact that the “medium is (also) the message,” and are not worrying that much about

the transformations that are taking place in our community, letting the capitalist model of apathy and convenience spread slowly. It seems to be cool to be "jaded" and consider DIY and non-profit to mean little and to be unimportant issues. And I really don't know why, to be honest—maybe "radical" people feel guilty and are accepting, in some ways, that their desire to keep pursuing these politics is an "arrogant" one. I mean, the last couple of years, all the jaded people have been trying hard to systematically associate radical statements with arrogance, right? So maybe that this has somehow demolished our self-confidence in what we try to accomplish.

I believe that we shouldn't feel guilty for openly desiring something else of our lives. We shouldn't feel restricted to speak out. Punk is an attempt to shout out that "politics" is not just politicians and specialists' business, and is not just about political slogans, and that we all have a word to say about how we are willing to construct our lives and communities. Those in power are willing to portray people who are daring to speak out and organize as arrogant bastards trying to impose their views upon others, and it is weird to realize that most punks today kind of unconsciously support this, and would rather stay silent than being pictured as "arrogant, intolerant" people.

Nobody here is saying that we know all the answers. We are basically people, with our share of stupidity and compromises, but should it prevent us from taking part in how this society is working? To me, punk is just a humble, friendly way to take back our lives and try to question this culture of submission, apathy, and convenience.

HaC: I don't want to seem too harsh on th' kids, but I think in recent years, there has been a general abandonment of articulated political positions in the U.S. punk scene, and that this phenomenon owes much less to any feelings of arrogance as much as it does to *fashion*—here and now at least, the smug dummy with sexy hair and snappy clothing has a much more exciting and successful social life than does anyone who pursues and stays true to a political analysis. Mirroring our spectacular society, superficial beauty still currently holds plenty of cachet in much of the "hardcore" scene here.

And although I do believe that the way things get done in, and the network that has come into existence through DIY hardcore/punk is more vital and relevant than the content of lyrics, I do find myself much more drawn to bands that express ideas and sentiments I see as interesting and passionate, or at least important to the people screaming them. So many bands these days seem to merely affect the aesthetic of anger and passion; I know it's a bit retrograde, but I often find myself nostalgic for the genuine sincerity (as corny as some of it was) of hardcore in the early '90s.

I've been thinking about the relative individualism that is still fairly entrenched in the DIY scene. A few years ago, my friend Carrie

was really trying to bring this into the general discourse of DIY with her ideas of *Do It Together*. Something I'd really like to see is a return of collectives that are explicitly punk and explicitly anarchist, such as those of years past: Alphabet Threat, Hippycore, Beehive, and, of course, Profane Existence. Perhaps there are these kinds of collectives out there and I just have no idea, but I'm curious if there ever were, or are now, collectives of this type active in the French punk or hardcore scenes. If so, were you ever part, and, generally, what do you think of this notion?

Christophe: As for political punk collectives in France, we basically have an old anarcho-punk collective in the center-east of France called Maloka. They did and are doing a lot of interesting things, mixing up punk and political activism. I can't think of any other formal punk collectives here, but as I told you already, people tend to work together quite easily here, and local scenes are usually helping out each other.

But back to your overall point, I do agree that there is these days an obvious tendency to turn punk into a less articulated political medium. You mention the trendy post-emo crowd, but I could add the nihilist, anti-PC punks as part of the same process—although I think I have more respect for the nihilist punks, because most of them are living much more uncomfortable lives than the rich healthy post-emo kids. To me, this situation is actually a clear consequence of the growing schism between punk and hardcore. On the one hand, you have the hardcore kids who are less and less in contact with the more punk crowds, and who are therefore less and less confronted with people, places, messages, experiences that could threaten their healthy, selfish, unquestioning, safe lifestyles; on the other hand, you have the punk kids who are less and less willing to share their culture and who are restraining the boundaries of the "punk culture" to old bands, old narrowed clichés, etc. I think that the '90s emo scene was great, raging, empowering, beautiful, meaningful; but at the same time, it opened doors for less and less outrage in punk, to the point that we are now getting all confused about where punk begins and ends. So, in a way, I totally understand that punk, as a culture, needed to somehow narrow its definition to something much more basic, clear and obvious. But I fear that the one of the consequences of this necessary "re-definition" of punk is that we are now totally stuck in a very narrowed vision of everything. In our fear to lose our culture, we are now stuck in a curious veneration of the past, with people more concerned about their oh-so-old-school record collections than with the political content of punk.

Christophe's musical legacy continues today with Inertie and Daymare, his two current bands. Stonehenge is still going as strong as ever.

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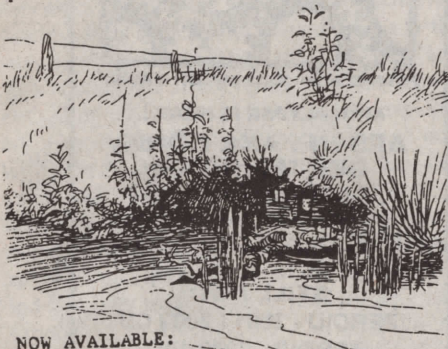
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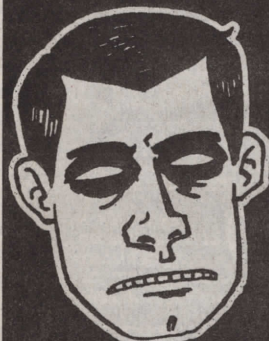
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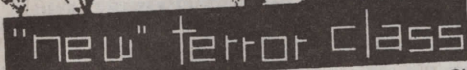
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AMERICA? #10 4.25x5.5 \$1 16pgs.

This personal 'zine was an intense little read. The writing for some of it flows from subject to subject with out jumping chaotically, but still manages to intertwine lots of stuff. Many subjects are touched upon in these 16 pages, but the overall vibe is one of personal empowerment, learning to enjoy the little things, and realizing that punk is not an end, but part of something larger. Not life changing, but very reassuring to me. CD (Travis Fristoe/PO Box 13077/Gainesville, FL 32604)

ANDY FRIENDLY CALLS IN SICK 3x5.5 \$? 28pgs.

This is an enjoyable little read about something most punks think about with disdain: work. The stories herein are all slightly comical style though generally the joke is on him. I really liked this. The theories on work intertwined with everyday practice and his anecdotes work really well. I recommend this one. LO (244 Oak St./Providence, RI 02909)

A WAY-SEEKING MIND #1 5.5x8.5 \$2 68pgs.

This 'zine entertained, enlightened, and interested me. Writing by a thoughtful soul, *A Way-Seeking Mind* works as a point of catharsis. Thoughts are hashed out, stories are re-told, ideologies are divulged, and through all that a person is fleshed out. This 'zine focuses on the three main topics of Steven's life: DIY punk, activism, and Buddhism. There are long pieces of introspection, trip diaries, and a good amount of space spent recounting events and making sense of them. You can really sink into this one, because there is plenty to read. Very nice, indeed. LO (Steven Kelly/3 Jacobs Path/Melville, NY 11747)

BITE BACK 8.5x11 free 16pgs.

Bite Back is sort of the Anarchist Black Cross of the ALF demographic; that is to say that it focuses on issues of those not satisfied with representative democracy to deal with their issues, and are imprisoned by the statistics for their actions. Besides profiles of imprisoned animal liberation activists, there's also a column by Rod Coronado, an interview with the founder of PETA, Ingrid Newkirk, the account of one fur farm action, and lastly, and the best part in my opinion, some advice on how not to get caught (though I find it amusing that they break the "Don't Keep Souvenirs" principle several times with photos of liberations in progress). All in all a fairly interesting resource for budding animal liberation direct action-ists, and while I respect these folks dedication, as an anarchist I have question single-issue politics. Why stop at animal liberation? TS (222 Lakeview Ave. #160-231/West Palm Beach, FL 33401)

BRAINSCAN #19 5.5x6.5 \$2+2 stamps 64pgs.

This issue of *Brainscan* focuses on planning and running the Portland 'zine Symposium in July 2002. Editor Alex reviews the work that goes into making such an event reality and the joys to be found collaborating with folks on a big project. Alex describes her mixed feelings when meeting folks with whom she has become familiar through their 'zines. And the enjoyable times that usually result. During preparation for the symposium Alex puts together a 'zine for trading titled "Fire Apparatus." Its contents are included here. She writes about her life relationship with 'zines, looking for pattern in life events, and irony. Then the whirlwind activity of the 'zine symposium takes over. Alex writes of people, food, workshops, new friends, and an impromptu art show. Analysis of some issues raised during the symposium is included here also. Several pages are given to becoming aware of and dealing with mental health issues. The day after the symposium closes Alex and a few friends begin teaching a workshop on 'zines at the Rock and Roll Camp for girls. During a week the participants learn to play an instrument, start a band, and play a show. They work on becoming comfortable with self expression and getting a feel for doing creative work for themselves. Alex ends the issue by getting married and considering how her life remains busy for the foreseeable future. SJS (Alex/PO Box 14332/Portland, OR 97293)

CHAOS 5.5x8.5 \$? 36pgs.

I found this 'zine quite intriguing. A collaboration of intellectual thinkers behind bars have come together to create this project. They hope the ideas written about inside prompt other to take up communication (with them and others) as so many of the topics discussed are vital to our future. Most of the content in here can be described as intellectual musings about utopia. They deal with the world we live in now and the world they hope for the future. Great thinkers and social activists are quoted throughout these pages, and corresponding articles get into the meat of many issues. Since this is the first issue, they are especially interested in communication (which they hope with guide the themes of issues to come). LO (Hard Travelin'/19890 Coyote Trail/Macomb, MI 48042)

CHICKENHEAD RECORDS 'ZINE #4-#5

8.5x11 \$1 24pgs. each
Humor is the name of the game here. The punks at CRZ want to give you a couple things to think about, some ideas to laugh about, and something to entertain yourself with. The columnists have one of two subjects: this is why I am a wild and crazy motherfucker, or this is why I think people are stupid. Reading columns from people who find themselves so entertaining can be annoying, but these were quite as bad. Anyway, the rest of the 'zine talks about cheap places to eat in LA, ways they tricked out their bikes, people they know who are serious gamers, or porn. Both issues of CRZ follow this set up. The original comics and art spaced out the articles nicely. Their wit and style made them the most entertaining aspect of these reads. LO (7438 Etiwanda/Reseda, CA 91335)

CHICKENHEAD 'ZINE AND ROLL #5

5.5x8.5 \$2 40pgs.
How odd is it that there are 2 'zines out there with the word chickenhead in their title, and that they have nothing to do with one another... Anyway, this is my favorite of the two. In this, Josher goes into great detail about his amusing life. Seen through the filter that is his witty writing style, his life seems like a lot of fun. Sure, there are bad times and fits of vomiting along the way—but those things just build his character. Here you get to read about extraordinary times of intoxication, getting a union payoff while being a shoddy employee, moments of serendipity, and some poetry. Now, don't cringe when I say poetry. Josher here concocted a new kind, based on the haiku, which is comprised of three six syllable lines. Thus, the hellku. There is a lot to enjoy in this issue. LO (Josher/PO Box 330/Richmond, VA 23218)

CHIHUAHUA AND PITBULL #2 5.5x8.5 \$2 32pgs.

Wow, I really liked this one. The new issue of this 'zine contains three highly entertaining stories. They each tell wacky stories of characters in smaller towns. We learn about a community organizer, a spiky punk, and an anti-graffiti mad man in these pages. Each of them gives a good sense of the writer as well, since his misadventures and interactions with these folks is what makes up these stories. They are told with a fresh perspective and self-effacing realism that I especially like. Good stuff. LO (Ethan/PO Box 72581/New Orleans, LA 70172)

CHUMPIRE #157 2x8.5 37¢ 8pgs.

Here Greg describes himself as grainy, then moves on to cultural observations. He discusses *Bowling For Columbine* and violence in general. Joe Strummer and death both quick and slow, and satisfying his curiosity about eastern Pennsylvania bar bands. Other topics considered include various movies past and present, questionable eating habits, indie pro wrestling, and Daniel Clowes. The short wide format this time is cool. SJS (PO Box 27/Annville, PA 17003)

CHUMPIRE #159 3x2.5 37¢ 12pgs.

Switching from the one page fold-it-and-put-it-in-your-pocket format to the pocket-sized just-put-it-in-your-pocket format, *Chumpire* is keeping you on your toes. I have to say, in booklet form, it does feel like I am reading something more substantial. Anyway, this new issue has the usual recorded/live music, 'zine, and pop culture reviews as well as some new ideas Greg's been thinking. *Chumpire* is like a shot of Pennsylvania for those who want an update but don't want to go. LO (PO Box 27/Annville, PA 17003)

CLENCH #6 8.5x11 37¢ 2pgs.

The latest installment of this flyer 'zine has a long interview with Dez of Black Flag. Well, as long as two pages in a large font can support. They talk about what inspired bands like Black Flag back in the day and what is going on in the scene now. LO (Philip Knowles/12780 E 2200 St./Atkinson, IL 61235)

COPPER PRESS #14 6x6 \$5 120pgs.

Copper Press is a slick music magazine in a cute little format. It has tons of ads, very nice photos, and crisp layout. Most of the content is article style write-ups on the bands Shuttlecock, The Flaming Lips, The Feud, The Daoson For, The Ed Kemper Trio, The Rum Diary, John Parish, Hot Hot Heat, Riddle Of Steel. Other features include interviews with visual artist Chris Duncan and band Bluebird, a piece on photographer David Middleton (as well as a handful of his photos), and a talk with snow boarder Erik Leines (complete with photos of him as well). *Copper Press* is a high end music magazine for semi-underground culture. LO (Steve Brydges/4343 Eagle Crest Dr./Williamsburg, MI 49690)

CRACKS IN THE WALL #3 5.5x8.5 \$1 20pgs.

Sort of youthfully cute and idealistically anti-ideology cut 'n' paste creation. An amusing collections on life, why don't we actually live it, complete with a narrator character that handles commentary and segues. Seriously political, but doesn't take itself too seriously. Really personal and personable. TS (Andy/2 Tinkham Glenn/Wilbraham, MA 01095)

CRUCIAL SESSION #1 5.5x8.5 \$? 16pgs.

This kid totally wants to marry his skateboard. 'Zine includes photographs, an Animal Chin interview, an account of self gorging at the Wisconsin Cheese Days, and meaty recipes stolen from *Thrasher*. I liked that the writing style was in the tradition of most skate magazines. It would have been great if it was longer, but for two stamps I'm not going to complain. JM (R. Rose/1312 N Gammner #1/Middleton, WI 53562)

DEAR LIESL #4 4.25x5.5 50¢/stamp 20pgs.

This is a series of observations and stories from the life of editor Jem. He describes relationships and interactions with friends and family and the understanding that often results. Jem mixes in many short comments and thoughts on his personality and daily events. These writings are warm hearted, humorous, and often offer bits of human insight drawn from day to day events. SJS (Jem Gardner/PO Box 1234/Bekeley, CA 94701)

**SJS=STEVE SNYDER,
FIL=FIL, CF=CHUCK
FRANCO, JM=JENNY
MUNDY, CD=CHRIS
DUPREY, TS=TIM
SHEEHAN,
BL=BLAKESLEE
FREDERIKSON,
&LO=LISA OGLESBY**

DER SLAMBANG 5.5x8.5 2 IRC 4pgs.

The way this short 'zine starts out, with lots of punk attitude and music reviews, I never expected it to suddenly move into a long commentary on musicals. Yep, that's right they go right from the Infest reviews, to the little Henry Fiat's Open Sore interview, to the lengthy rant on musicals. And it isn't that he doesn't like them. He does. In fact, he reviews them with the same honest tone anything else. I found myself nodding along, thinking he was pretty right on about *Gigi*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *West Side Story*. So this newsletter ends up being my favorite short read of the issue. The 'zine is free, but do them a favor and toss in a couple IRCs for the postage. All the text is in German. LO (Henrik Zenker/Reppurrerstr. 104/76137 Karlsruhe/Germany)

DIE SWEET 5.5x8.5 \$2 32pgs.

Die Sweet tells two quirky stories of co-existence through comics. The first takes us on an adventure with adversarial neighbors and nudist housemates. The second talks about what people eat and what happens when tempers flare on the subject of food. Each of them is off beat and original. While the style of the art didn't suck me in on its own, it is nice to see original art in 'zines nowadays. It is a short and pleasant read. LO (Cybele Collins/29 Hudson St. #2/Providence, RI 02909)

DIME STORE #7 5.5x8.5 \$1 28pgs.

I enjoyed this even though the stories are mundane. I liked the writers filter of the world. Lots of short stories, good for people with short attention spans. CD (10 Yello Flax/Littleton, CO 80127)

THE DREAM IS NOT DEAD #1 8.5x11 \$5 44pgs.

This 'zine has three great things going for it. One, it shows a true dedication to contributing and improving the scene it speaks to. Two, it looks good. Three, the editor likes good bands that appeal to a large amount of readers. For those reasons, most people would like this one. Inside you can read interviews with Tear It Up!, Max from 625 Productions, and Panic. Each of which is lengthy and interesting. He has a few rants, a vacation tour diary, and a lot of quality photos—plus there are some well done music and 'zine reviews. LO (J. Daems/Rooseveltstraat 7a/2321 BK Leiden/The Netherlands)

DROP OUT #5 9x9 \$? 36pgs.

This is a 'zine with photos, poetry and writing. Featured are Mike Vallely, Tobin Yelland, ED Docherty, Matt Average and more. Photos of BMX, skate boarding, boxing, and other random stuff. This 'zine is cool because it brings together unrelated topics and mediums for a real good time. CD (PO Box 22971/Oakland, CA 94609)

E. 2ND AVE. HOUSE 'ZINE #1 4.25x5.5 \$? 40pgs.

This is a collaboration between about ten kids who all live in this house in Vancouver. Each person has their little section to say whatever they want. The two that had the biggest impact on me were by a couple who wrote openly about their experience with having an abortion and how that affected them. The whole project is very inviting, friendly, and open. I mean it's basically like an open house, there are little maps to where they live and to where all the hot spots are and on the back it even says "come visit!" FIL (2755 E 2nd Ave./Vancouver, BC/V5M 1E2/Canada)

FERTILE GROUND #1 5.5x8.5 \$2 32pgs.

Fertile Ground is a 'zine about parenting which covers a range of issues relevant to moms and dads who choose DIY methods of birthing and raising their children. This issue begins with editor Stacey telling the story of her son's homebirth. Stacey provides quite a detailed description of what she felt as well as the procedures and help from her midwives. In the following pages various folks contribute stories from their lives as mothers. You get first hand knowledge of breast feeding, childcare, creating a nursery, babies' sleep habits, and various body excretions. Other contents include poems, a few reviews of parenting related books and 'zines, and a story of raising a family while living in Peru. Photos illustrating the stories are scattered throughout the pages. All the stories are written with a positive sense of humor to keep readers interested while offering important understanding through experience. SJS (Stacey/2084 Court Ave./Memphis, TN 38104)

FINGER ON THE TRIGGER #5 4.25x5.5 \$1.74 80pgs.

Get this 'zine! A wonderful, thought-provoking read. As Ade states in her introduction, she intends her 'zine to mostly be a forum for punk women of color, which is really essential in a white male dominated scene (and society). She makes a healthy critique of the punk/hardcore scene without ranting, but rather by telling her story and sharing the stories of others. The 'zine also includes a short bio on Maddog Karla, 'zine reviews, travel tips, and a Denzel Washington love story. And it's just the right size to fit in your back pocket! Totally entertaining, and highly recommended. JM (Adee Licious, 806 East Belmont, Pensacola FL 32501)

FIRST TWO: 6AM BAGEL SHOP & LANDSCAPE (IF YOU BELIEVE IN SUCH THINGS)

5.5x8.5 \$3 44pgs.
Eric, the author of this poetry collection, affirmed in the accompanying letter that he of course understands the need for "fair and balanced" reviews, but asked that this publication be given to a reviewer who at least likes poetry a little bit. A fair request, to be sure; I fear however, at least in my estimation of things, that the writers of poetry far outnumber the pure consumers. And either my theory is affirmed here once again, or Lisa and Leslie are a tad sadistic, as this collection of poetry arrived in my review stack. So, to unappreciative eyes, what we have here is a thick chapbook collecting the poetry of two of Eric's previous books. Some long, many as short as five or so lines; free-verse alphabet soup expressing thoughts on bad poetry written in bagel shops, being blasted with a shotgun, life in a college town, neighbors, politics, feelings, and that sort of thing. Some of the better stuff reads like Navio Forge lyrics, some of the rest is...perhaps over my head? Too personal to be of interest to me? Too vague for me to find worthwhile to parse out the intention? For what it's worth, I do believe hardcore punk ideals and ideas should find expression in mediums other than music; I personally have a hard time getting behind poetry—but perhaps you don't. If it's your thing, check this out, 'cause Eric seems serious about verse and hard-working enough to merit your support. TS (Eric Swanger/PO Box 197/Lewisburg, PA 17837)

FLY, PAPER FLY #2 5.5x4 \$1 & a letter 40pgs.

A very personal and emotional 'zine, composed of short pieces covering topics of marriage (pro), eating disorders, emotional disorders, creating a family, sexual violence, racism, war, and the "pro-life" movement (con), among other things. All expressed with brutal vulnerability, intimacy, and a fierce feminist fighting spirit. Heavy stuff appropriate for the dark times we're currently existing in. TS (Melissa/PO Box 2335/Norman, OK 73070)

GAINING GROUND #1 5.5x8.5 \$5 52pgs.

The intro to *Gaining Ground* talks about doing a 'zine out of sheer love for the music, in order to expose people to new ideas, and to contribute something tangible to the greater scene. That is pretty admirable. Medium-sized interviews with One Up, Know Your Enemy, and Panic Attack fill up most of the pages. The said interviews are mostly concerned with what the bands have going on project-wise and how it was that they got together to play music. I really liked the rant in which he argues the merits and sentimental value of vinyl (even demo tapes) over CDs. (Again, another admirable quality of this 'zine.) A Fairlight tour diary, some funny stories, more short rants, memories of Reaching Forward's last show, a piece on why Bold still rules, and some music reviews fill out the rest of the issue. This is a good first issue with a nice looking layout. Even if you disagree about which bands are the most interesting, you can certainly appreciate the spirit behind this 'zine. LO (Mirko Meerwald/Millettstraat 13-1/1077 ZA Amsterdam/The Netherlands)

GIRL SWIRL FANZINE #9 5.5x4 \$2 72pgs.

I may be mistaken, but I think I remember this particular 'zine from way back in the personal 'zine explosion of the mid-'90s; if this is not the case in reality, it is at least so in spirit. This issue of *Girl Swirl* features a short slice-of-life for each letter of the alphabet. These run an emotional gamut from amusing to nostalgic to intimate and many other shades between. Taryn is one of those kids that's moved around tons and has many stories from all the places she's lived and the people that she has been close to that can really draw one in when done correctly; these are done quite so. This is very nicely put together, and comes off as a really well thought-out project. Fans of *Doris* or *Slander* should apply. TS (Taryn Hipp/PO Box 8/Allston, MA 02134)

ZINE REVIEWS

GIANT HAYSTACKS w/CD comp 5.5x8.5 \$? 12pgs.
Giant Haystacks put together a short "lifestyle" zine to accompany their 6 song CD. Each band member contributes a poem, story, or image to the pages. The music is very listenable rock with shifting rhythms, extended guitar lines, and spoken/sung vocals. You get six songs, each around two minutes long. SJS (PO Box 22971/Oakland, CA 94609)

GREEN ANARCHY #11 news \$3 24pgs.
I have a love-hate relationship with this magazine and many of John Zerrans followers. While this magazine still has many valid points, I find myself sometimes both in favor and at odds with the opinions expressed within. Although some of them obscured by pretension and reactionary political views only capable by well off revolutionaries. I really could get into a whole tirade for and against this issue. Especially since it's the "Fuck Science" issue and I am currently studying both Zoology and Environmental Biology. Science is what we make it. It could be used to develop new, more sophisticated missiles to blow our selves away (wouldn't that be something...) or to reverse the wrong doing that Capitalism and Imperialism has done to the Earth and its people. You decide what science is; don't let the Capitalist do that for you. If it were a black and white argument then I would choose my side, it's not though sorry. Enough of that! This is an excellent resource for prisoner support, action updates and anarchist-related news from around the world. CP (PO Box 11331/Eugene, OR 97440)

GREEN ANARCHY #12 news \$3 24pgs.
The latest issue of this political newsletter covers many topics. Articles on the US war machine, the fall of Rome, a look at the avenues of direct action, technology and communication, and the cycle of work were some of the highlights for this reader. An interview with film maker Godfrey Reggio, who made the *Qatsi* trilogy. This issue rounds out with some lengthy book reviews, news of recent eco-political actions, and much more. The collective behind/makers of *Green Anarchy* do their best to put out an informative and interesting read. On many fronts they succeed, since there is so much you can take away from this project. LO (PO Box 11331/Eugene, OR 97440)

GULLIBLE #24 5.5x8.5 \$1 28pgs.
Normally *Gullible* fills its pages with wild punk rock adventure and stories of his hometown. This time around, they take a nice detour into the land of fiction. Issue #23 entertains you with two short stories. I really enjoyed both of these. The tale of young love and the other of a friends death are very well written. Each of them offered more than your basic story and show a strong sense of how people are. They describe with depth and flesh out the characters and plots well. Good job, Chris. LO (CT/PO Box 4909/Richmond, VA 23220)

HEAD WOUND #14 5.5x8.5 \$2 36pgs.
A self-described DIY punk rock fanzine, *Head Wound* is a cut'n'paste cache of diverse content: editorials, reviews, interviews with Dublin Anarchist Support and Brighton Anarchist Black Cross, and a lot of information on keeping in contact with prisoners. Other interviews with Bickle's Cab, Indicator, Tower Blocks, Intensive Care, and Isy, the woman behind the very cool *Morgenmuffel* zine. TS (Rachel/145-9 Cardigan Rd./Leeds/LS6 1LJ/UK)

THE HIDDEN AGENDA #3 5.5x8.5 \$1/trade 32pgs.
Very cool read here. Interesting article on the Burning Man Festival, Jesus Christ and cloning, and an interview with an author (and a member of MENSA) with a very interesting take on the Bible, human "creation" (as a race to mine gold for intergalactic entities), and other interesting things like reviews etc... I read through this very quickly because it was interesting, not boring. Check it out. If you like the interview, check out some stuff by Stichtin or David Kice. CF (The Anarchist Library/1019 N Central Ave./Phoenix, AZ 85004)

HOMOSAPIEN = DISEASE #1 5.5x8.5 \$? 28pgs.
Do you hate the world? Do you hate humans but care about the heavy music they make? If so, this one is for you. Issue one delves into regular "zine content with interviews with Richard Johnson and Social Infestation, well done music reviews, and some musings about what happened to old bands. Clint also prints lists of bands he likes and a bunch of flyers from shows he thought were good. There are plenty of internet URLs given for sites he approves of, but no address I can find for him anywhere. How elusive. LO (no address)

IRON ARMOR #4 5.5x8.5 \$2 32pgs.
Iron Armor focuses on the New York City oi, streetpunk, and hardcore crowd. Within it's pages you will find music reviews, interviews, bits of news from around the planet, a public survey on perceptions of the word "skinhead," and an oi! crossword puzzle. In this issue interviews with Condition, Bulldog Spirit, and Condemned 84 cover band histories and discography information as well as scene politics. SJS (Joe P/PO Box 106/New York, NY 10008)

IT'S ALL GRAVY #3-#4 5.5x8.5 \$1 each 30pgs. each
It's All Gravy is a little "zine dedicated to the smaller ska and punk scenes in Los Angeles. The Charolasso Collective spreads writing duties out between them to bring you show reviews, rants, words of wisdom, and ideas about music. The CC is highly active in going to local shows and supporting people having a great time. They even interview local bands such as 2mex (whose interview spanned both issues). The third installment features a long (reprinted) article on Tupac and the effect he had in life and has in death. Issue #4 features information about STDs, cartoon commentary, and even a pot brownie recipe. LO (Nickolai Garcia/312 W 8th St./Los Angeles, CA 90014)

KABLYS #12 8.5x12 \$? 64pgs.
Written in Lithuanian, this "zine seems to cover the music and political scenes. This issue looks amazing and comes with CD sampler and free 2003 calendar poster (ours didn't have CD). Inside you can read about the Anarchist Black Cross and the Roskilde Fest, as well as reviews, news, and columns. They feature interviews/write-ups with Children Of Fall, The Wage Of Sin, Crimethink/Catharsis, The Clash, Pest Of A Child, Intensity, Peawees, Apatija, CurlUpAndDie, Hope Dies Last, Skaos, Burn Hollywood Burn, and Cesta/Sabot vs. Nekac/Zabada. LO (Kestas K./PO Box 3041/2026 Vilnius/Lithuania)

KÉROSENE #0 9x12 free 48pgs.
After a hiatus, this "zine has returned with plenty of new blood to keep it going. Since the first issue is free they decided to call it issue #0, even though it really is the 13th installment of *Kérosène*. The text is all in French and the layout and printing quality is quite nice. The content for this issue contains news, music and "zine reviews, tour reports from Pigzwilltoast and Chokebore, and lots of ads. You will also find interviews with Pull, Scuttle, Girls Against Boys, Dead Pop Club, Cheval De Frise, and Waiting For An Angel. LO (16, Rue De L'égaule/85600 Montaigu/France)

THE KKK TOOK MY ROOTBEER AWAY #1 5.5x4.25 \$3 32pgs.
This pocket-sized "zine was a really enjoyable read for me. With lots of text in English and German, this one is mostly about personal issues but tosses in some political commentary as well. Liked the frank approach to communicating feelings. Markus does not like on "proper" writing style, and that helps to make his expressions all the more real. My only suggestion is that, with that wild writing style, Markus might want to stick to the more personal aspects of the "zine and avoid anything that comes off like an article. His personal pieces come off better and they really are the stronger half of the "zine anyway. LO (Markus Kampschneider/Metzgerstr. 58/48151 Münster/Germany)

KILLING CUPID #1 7x7 \$4.50 24pgs.
Two guys collaboration on a mixed-medium comic book telling the tale of one man's quest to rid himself of the devil god who has been ruining his life since pre-pubesence. The story seems okay enough, though not without a few "duke-isms" that made me cringe a bit. The art has interesting parts, though overall I don't think I like the mixing of hand-drawn characters on computer generated/altered backgrounds. Also included with this publication was a "7" by Pistole a Disk a new and exciting hardcore unit out of Seattle. This is some seriously crunchy, yet anthemic and melodic hardcore featuring none other than Bill Baker of Slowsidown and Jayhawk, one of my fave HC vocalists of all time. I'd wondered where he'd disappeared to, and I'm glad to see him back at what he does really fucking well. Can't wait to hear more. TS (Alan/821 SE 29th Ave. #1/Portland, OR 97214)

LA BEAN #7 9x12 \$1 32pgs.
Totally fun! This "zine discusses the Croatian hardcore-punk scene, as well as highlights from other Eastern European scenes. It includes interviews with Croatian band Equal and Serbian band No Choice. I was inspired to learn that the punks from Serbia and Croatia are united despite the linguistic and political arguments that nationalists from their respective countries have become so divided over. This is Mx's first issue of the "zine in English, and I was interested to find out that punks in Eastern Europe used English to overcome language differences that their leaders have been arguing over for so long. Mx's English is choppy at some times, but it is definitely easier to read than a textbook. *La Bean* also includes our journals, columns, editorials, praise for the band Debeli predrin (Far President), and an account of resistance against NATO in Slovenia. Although the layout could be cleaner and the font larger, this "zine is an interesting introduction to the Croatian scene. JM (Martjan Galovic/Kabac 9-1-15/52220 Labin/Croatia)

LICKIN' THE BEATERS 8x8 \$12 98pgs.
This book features pages upon pages of supposed low fat vegan dessert recipes. I made the Easy Chocolate Fudge from this book. It certainly didn't seem low fat, but it was damn good! If you decide to make the fudge from this recipe, be warned that you'll need to triple it to get a party sized amount. Also, said tripling will cause you to nearly overflow a 6 quart pot with gooey candy mess. I got some great ideas from this book and I recommend it for sweet addicts like myself. LO (Stue/130 Clinton St. #27/Toronto, ON/M6G 2Y3/Canada)

LITTLE BLACK STAR #26 5.5x8.5 37¢ 4pgs.
Little Black Star is a small publication that comes out about every other week. If you send them some stamps, they will keep you abreast of international politics pertaining mostly to the US foreign policy and War On Terror. Other pieces cover the whole spectrum of liberal/anarchist politics and news. The short contributions are told with a sizeable amount of wit and disgust. LO (PO Box 197/Lewisham, VA 17837)

LITTLE GUY WITH BIG HOPES #6 8.5x11 \$3 28pgs.
The Little Guy that publishes this "zine has a big amount to say. He describes his work as merely "political" but I'd be more apt to label it as an anti-authoritarian, revolutionary, and well-educated rant on a hodgepodge of topics. In this particular issue, he delves into discussions on love being the ultimate act of resistance, intricacies involved with living/dressing as a punk in mainstream society, the injustice inherent in overpriced quality food and health care, and several articles that cover local anarchist actions in and around New Zealand. The layout is clean and neatly organized and he provides a lengthy list of resources/sources on the last page. His cry to educate the self and think before acting must be commended, because it's apparent that he heeds his own advice while providing his readers with a solid foundation for their own personal development. BL (PO Box 9263/Te Aro/Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand)

LITTLE GUY WITH BIG HOPES #7 8.5x11 \$3 36pgs.
Little Guy is back with another hefty issue. It packs a lengthier punch than issue #6, with insight on why critical thinking is a building block of revolution, how fear is pumped into the public as a control tactic, how a lack of democracy is the root cause of worldwide hunger and poverty, and reports that consider mental illness not a disease but rather a complex coping strategy triggered by traumatic events. There are also more New Zealand activist reports, one of which covers an indigenous analysis of class struggle and capitalism I found particularly interesting. For as much as I mentioned, there are many articles I overlooked that touch upon subjects such as stopping rape, the exclusiveness of sex, iron deficiency, possible benefits of drinking urine, etc. For all it's worth, this "zine jumpstarts the mental processes of the reader and wets the appetite for learning more about the issues covered. My only complaint is that the list of sources isn't as well documented as in issue #6; there were several articles that quoted scientific studies/published papers and I was left wondering how to obtain them. BL (see above address)

LEAPFROG #8 5.5x8.5 \$? 28pgs.
Here is another fine issue of *Leapfrog*. This issue features an interview with a member of Roxbury, MA organization Bikes Not Bombs. The philosophy and community role of the organization is discussed. One article looks at SUVs as lightning rods for criticism of our auto dependent culture. Another looks at the collectors market for antique British bicycles and parts. There is an interview with the band named "Bicycle" who apparently tour by bicycle. The columns section covers a variety of two wheeled issues, and there is a page or two of suggestions for bicycle related web sites. There is a nice review of a book written about the Critical Mass movement and another essay that appreciates the might bicycle helmet. If you understand the need to ride a bicycle I suspect you will enjoy *Leapfrog Bike* "zine. SJS (Scott Spitz/6163 Carrollton Ave./Indianapolis, IN 46220)

THE MADISON INSURGENT Vol. 2 #7 news \$? 16pgs.
This newsletter covers issues important to the local Madison community as well as topics relevant no matter where you call home. The features I found more interesting were the informational section on worm composting and the background information in support of Buy Nothing Day. Since this issue is from the end of last year, a few of the topics in here have become outdated by other news. Still, the collective who put out this newsletter are dedicated to providing you with honest, liberal news for you to think on. Of course, this would be more useful to me if I lived in the Madison area, but plenty of the content isn't community specific. LO (mad_insurgent@yahoo.com)

METAL WIRE #9 9x12 \$? 10pgs.
This is a black metal fanzine from Sweden that is all in Swedish. I don't know much about the metal scene there, and I can't read Swedish either. So this fanzine was sort of lost on me. Anyway, if you are into Swedish metal and can read Swedish there certainly is a lot being offered up here. Pages upon pages of reviews, write ups, pictures, and information about what is going on in that scene. At the Ebullition office, we mostly entertained ourselves with wacky the pictures of people in cloaks or wearing armor (like Morgenstern or Battlereid). Intense. LO (Jonas Granvik/Valmansgatan 7B/791 31 Falun/Sweden)

MISHAP #14 VOL. 1-2 5.5x8.5 trade/donation 36pgs. each
I was really stoked on the last issue of this mag with the cool punk/Chulu thing going on. These two issues are more personal writings and some short stories from being punk in Eugene then anything else really. The writing is cool, and it's always nice to take a peek into someone else's world. I really don't know about the whole argument against using punk as a "derogatory" term. Fuck, what do you think a punk was before it was a musical/lifestyle (whatever) movement. I was a worthless punk. Plus, a lot of punks I have met are worthless scumbags. This dude probably isn't though. I dig his zone as well as you should to. It will probably keep you from being a worthless scumbag, like me, punk ass. CF (PO Box 5841/Eugene, OR 97405)

MOON RUST #4 4.25x5.5 37¢/trade 32pgs.
Structured like a split "zine, *Moon Rust* highlights the contributors of its editors by separating them into half and setting them upside down one another. Side Mike has many entries that seem to have come just from his diary or personal journal. He explains his overwhelming fondness and connection to Against Me!, describes loving and hoping to reconstruct in memory the attributes of a dream girl, rants about the trials and tribulations of orthodontics, and recalls fondly misadventures, feeling alive, and reoccurring dreams. At times his stories get so personal and honest you have to question why he would let these things out. Doesn't he realize some associations make him seem a little wacked? Perhaps that is his statement. Side Alex features a long a winding story about how he got mononucleosis. It begins with a tour story with his band (17th Class), goes into an anecdote of him giving blood at school, and even has a disgusting bit about drinking water that had a cigarette soaking in it. Alex tells a good story. The meandering through different topics only helps to flesh out life for his character. Alex also does a "zine called *Dunk And Piss*. LO (Alex & Mike/23 Alger Dr./Rochester, NY 14624)

MORGENMUFFEL #11 6x8.5 \$1 28pgs.
The collection of comics and stories in this issue are pretty entertaining. Isy explains the chronicle of opening a collective space as well as a number of silly anecdotes about her day to day. The first person perspective and open style fits well here, and the whole issue come together well. I felt like I got a strong sense of her character, enjoying the humor along the way. The mix of comics and written pieces works very well in this issue. LO (Isy/PO Box 74/Brighton/BN1 4ZQ/UK)

MY WAR #2 5.5x8.5 \$? 24pgs.
Cool. Finally a punk music "zine. Imagine that, in a world of personal diatribes, this "zine is all over the place. Upside down here, crooked there, choppy some where else. They have cool multi interviews with Off Minor, Song of Zarathustra, Sin Dios, and Darkest Hour. The Locust is in there to. This is cool, hey baby I like your style you German you. CF (Mj Amante/PO Box 1112/39001 Magdeburg/Germany)

NEVER SAY DIE #7 5.5x8.5 1 IRC 12pgs.
This little newsletter has a lot of information to offer up, but you might need a magnifying glass to read it all. The interviews with Ena of Dignity and Samirah of *ReDirected* as well as the Geeks from Korea are interesting and large enough to read. But, man, that single spaced news section that reads like one long line is a killer. LO (Hayatullah/BLK 110/Bedok North Road #02-2288/S (460110)/Singapore)

NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST #6 8.5x11 \$4 56pgs.
The only real distinction in my head between this "zine and *Green Anarchy* or *News From Nowhere*, this that this one doesn't come from Eugene. In fact, these anarcho-punks are located way out in Boston. This "zine focuses attention equally on theory, strategy, and debate. They talk about the 1926 platform and its effects on anarchist movements worldwide, the story of Love & Rage's deconstruction, the role of collective responsibility, and much more within these pages. I appreciated the way they present relevant articles and ideas to stimulate the mind of their readership, rather than just listing action after action. For that reason, *Northeastern Anarchist* makes itself a powerful tool for those looking to learn more about the complexity of anarchism. LO (PO Box 230685/Boston, MA 02123)

NEWS FROM NOWHERE #2 news \$1 8pgs.

This political newspaper focuses a lot of attention on the ideas of gardening, landscape, and activism in the field of ecology. They also talk about issues of global capitalism and suggestions for culture jamming. The articles herein are informative, well thought out, and generally interesting. If anything, they try to be too heady... but you can't really fault them for trying to have quality stuff. LO (PO Box 10384/Eugene, OR 97440)

NEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND #1 8.5x11 \$3 36pgs.

Don't confuse this one from *News From Nowhere*. While the style is similar, they are two different projects - even though the come from the same town. *News From The Underground* used to be called *Earth First's Action Update* focuses in on international ecological activist news. Articles on anti-war demonstrations and direct actions, forest protection action as well as news stories to update you on recent animal liberation, political prisoner, worker's rights, and environmental protection actions. In hopes to have a newsletter available each month, contributions are welcome. LO (PO Box 10384/Eugene, OR 97440)

OUTSIDE WORLD #8 8.5x11 \$1/trade 22pgs.

The front cover reads "Destroying What Destroys You". Definitely a sentiment I can get behind. Here's what's inside: Weird news, drought facts, the DC Sniper, unemployment, reviews, and lots of stuff about rodents. Fairly uninspired cut'n'paste layout. TS (Norman/2121 18th St. N/Arlington, VA 22201)

PLACENTA #2 5.5x8.5 \$3 36pgs.

Described as "a punk rock parenting 'zine'." I don't know much about babies, but this 'zine makes them seem not so scary. Written by a mama, it includes a punk rock family tour diary, the author's friends' story of their baby's home birth, opinions on vaccination, and punk parent's resources. There is also a review of veggie/vegan/mindful children's books (get to 'em while they're young!) and recipes, which appealed to the carnivore in me. I would recommend this to punk parents but there's not much in it for those of us who are baby-challenged. Visit her website at <http://www.gsoe.net/placentazine/>. JM (Rosa Maria DiDonato/4412 Ave. A/204/Austin, TX 78751)

PROFANE EXISTENCE #41 news free 16pgs.

Back with a Molotov-sized bang, it's everyone's favorite long-running anarcho-punk 'zine!...and probably the only of its type, at least Stateside. There's a lot of content here, including columns, letters, reviews, and ads; articles about the war, fighting socialism, and the decline of wild Atlantic salmon; interviews with folks from the Seward Community Café, Contravene, and the almighty Rambo. And even though there's a lot of writing here about what we (anarchists) don't want, there's overall positive feeling to the whole thing, which is really nice and refreshing. Antidotal to the Rational Democraticrats that dominates most of the political discussions in HC/punk. Anarcho-punks and anarcho-emo-hardcore kids unite! TS (PO Box 8722/Minneapolis, MN 55408)

PUNK IS LIKE A BOX OF CANDY 4x3.5 \$2 36pgs.

It's nice to sit down for a few minutes and be let into the life of someone you've never met. *Punk Is Like A Box Of Candy* chronicles the punk rock history of the author. You learn about her childhood, what sparked her interest in the subculture, some activities she took part in, as well as what challenges for inspiration and meaning as she gets older within the scene. The writing style seems amateur, but the themes make up for this. Personally, I enjoyed the basic nature of the story being told. LO (Sue/130 Clinton St. #27/Toronto, ON/M6G 2Y3Canada)

Q IS FOR TREASON #5 5.5x8.5 \$1 12pgs.

This short 'zine reads as a series of journal entries. The writing erupts with description at every opportunity. So much so, that at times it seems to be more for a journal writing class than what might naturally fall someone's personal pages. The stories here claim to be exaggerated truth, so the writing is more for the sake of the mood or moral than documentation. I liked the style and liked this quick read. LO (Anna Key/Robot Anarchist Temple/11207-73 Ave./Edmonton, AB/T6G 0C7/Canada)

RECLUSE 'ZINE #8 5.5x8.5 \$1.25 40pgs.

Out of the Midwest, comes *Recluse*, sort of somewhere between a personal 'zine and something like MRR or HaC. The content seems fairly eclectic, an interview with the director of an animal rights group rides right along a tale of punk rock hi jinks and sex with underage women. But there's a lot of stuff in between: local 'zine news, columns, reviews, thoughts on Kurt Cobain, recipes, info on pets, and a tribute to Joe Strummer. A variety of content for a variety of readers; computer layout, clean but sterile. TS (PO Box 307663/Columbus, OH 43230)

RED EYE 4x3 \$1 124pgs.

Red Eye is comprised of a string of events in the life of editor Ludovic. He relates them with considerable attention to detail describing his physical and emotional status as well as place and time. Ludovic finds conflict with his friends and often has difficulty feeling comfortable or included when with a group of people. He explores the aspects of his personality and beliefs that lead to such situations. The story takes place in wintertime Seattle and begins with Ludovic looking for a job. He engages in some fun protest action, attempts train hopping, debates reasons for making art, is refused entry to a big party, goes in search of Kurt Cobain's former mansion, celebrates winter solstice and New Years Eve, and ends up at a show in Vancouver. Several themes are elaborated throughout the story. Ludovic has an aversion to being cold and strong feelings about keeping art close to one's soul and not selling to the highest bidder. He also explores the nature and permanence of writing down and publishing one's stories. *Red Eye* captures one person's life experience and introspective explorations. It is a personal story that grapples with creative impulse, loneliness, and companionship. A very fine 'zine. SJS (Ludovic Besancon/PO Box 95696/Seattle, WA 98145)

RESERVED #6 8.5x11 \$2 22pgs.

The drawing on the cover has Lego people in various punk styles and situations. It amused me, so I decided to grab this and see what it had to offer. The short story recounting a time period wrought with depression and depravity interested me the most. Written in a modern, self-effacing style, this one has a lot of minute wonder to offer up. Other features of this issue include an interview with the band Economist and label Magic Bullet Records, an end of the year summary of the life of the editor, some ads, and many music reviews. LO (2602 Hartford Rd./Fallston, MD 21047)

REV. RICHARD J. MACKIN'S BOOK OF LETTERS #17 5.5x8.5 \$3 40pgs.

If you've seen any previous issue of this 'zine, you know exactly what to expect—wacky humor and corporate criticism in the form of correspondence with said mega-corps. Pointing out disturbing or silly advertising campaigns, questioning corporate strategies, and poking fun at CEOs is the order of the day. This new issue includes a recent slough of haikus. And, man, some of the responses he gets are priceless! LO (PO Box 890/Allston, MA 02134)

ROCK OUT! 5.5x8.5 \$? 56pgs.

I'm really into these DIY, resource type zines; it's like building a little punk encyclopedia. This one's especially great. It covers just about everything you would want to consider when booking your own shows. Whether you've been setting up shows for years or never even thought of doing it yourself, you could benefit from reading this. They're approach is extremely supportive and this is more of just a way for them to try and share some ideas rather than trying to tell you what to do. It was written by a few girls from Chicago, who started booking shows to benefit their local Women's Health Center. I especially appreciated their ideas on making a conscious effort to address issues of sexism, homophobia and racism just in the way that you book shows. This is a good resource to have. FIL (Megan Wells/PO Box 5027/Chicago, IL 60680)

SHORT, FAST, & LOUD #9 8.5x11 \$3 96pgs.

This hardcore punk 'zine features columns, interviews, live action photos, and 23 pages of reviews. Nearly all the ads are concentrated in the back pages, which is a nice idea. A column section opens *Short, Fast, & Loud* with quite a lot of thoughts on the state of hardcore punk and its various and sundry scenes. There rants about punks young and middle aged, punk rock old and new, and punk scene change or stagnation. One column on punk photography stands out. There also a column dedicated to music and news from the underground metal scene. If another piece various folks are asked to describe 5 crazy things they have seen at shows. Erica Beck of Boy Record Store in Tokyo talks about her store, hardcore in Japan, and women in the scene. Bored In, Cold Sweat, and Milken discuss their recordings, philosophies, and scene issues. Two old school hardcore bands, Pandemonium from the Netherlands and California's Capitol Punishment, are featured to retrospective interviews and discographies. Among a few other pieces, noise as music receives a very brief history and a more brief review of people and bands currently making noise as music. SJS (225 Lincoln Ave./Cotai, CA 94031)

SLUG & LETTUCE #74 news 60c 20pgs.

Like I said last quarter, not many good things can be said about S&L that already haven't been said. A staple of the East Coast hardcore punk for many years, hope to see many more. This issue includes the usual editorial, columns/classifieds, reviews, and the requisite fly comic. And the photos, can't forget the photos. With an even smaller point-size than HaC, you can bet S&L has more content per square inch than any other punk 'zine. TS (Christine/PO Box 26632/Richmond, VA 23261)

SPECK #10 7x8.5 \$? 4pgs.

Thematic focus on some of the artist sub-genres of punk and new-wave, past and present; includes interviews with various members of Nervous Gender, Enon, Run for Cover Lovers, Phantom Limbs, Beef Terminal, Flipper, and Would-Be Goods. Also, 'zine and music reviews, and a couple of tangential articles, such as "Shoe Profiler: The Psychology of Footwear." Computer layout with lots of fonts. TS (252-2780 Cooperative Way/Vancouver, BC/V5M 4S3/Canada)

STEALING BABIES 7x8.5 \$? 20pgs.

An odd title, but a good read. This collection of stories discusses a dying bird, defending empires, cleaning and living, and how our protagonist ended a bout of clinical depression. Each one has a nice layering of surface story and deeper meaning. Grandier ideas fit into the small boxes I've tersely described and create some very well written stuff. LO (2602 Hartford Rd./Fallston, MD 21047)

STIFF JAW 7x8.5 \$10 124pgs.

Stiff Jaw entertained me for two reasons: subject matter and original style. While the story covers the familiar subject matter of a forlorn and loveless punk, it does so with a nice sense of minutia and observation. The accompanying artwork is edgy. Faces and bodies are skewed and put upon in a way that pushes the emotion of the character onto the physical form. I really liked it. This comic has a huge amount of pages and plenty that you want to rip out and put on your wall. Very nice. LO (Philip Knowles/12780 E 2200 St./Atkinson, IL 61235)

STIR KRAZY #5 8.5x11 \$4 28pgs.

Stir Krazy prints a healthy portion of conversation topics and points of debate. The pieces here comment on the right to privacy, the death penalty, the role of the US as the sole superpower, hypotheses for peace, corporate censorship, and patriotism. They also review a couple printed items and throw in an odd mix of collaged visuals. Most of the pieces here are short, so you just get a notion of the ideas they commenting on before moving onto the next one. I feel this is done to encourage communication between the 'zine makers and those on the outside. LO (Gary #95B0644/PO Box 25148/Rochester, NY 14445)

STONE HOTEL book \$? 120pgs.

By Raegan Butcher. I'm not a big fan of most Crimethlnc publications, but I thought this was alright. It is a collection of poems written by a prisoner, published in small press format in an edition of 2000. It is part of Crimethlnc's Letter Series. Both the literary style and subject matter reminded me of Bukowski. Poetry can often be mind-numbingly boring, but this was very well written and flowed nicely. Some racial (not racist) comments would have been better left unsaid, especially as far as literature directed towards a leftist/radical audience. Overall, however, this collection is an interesting snapshot (mugshot?) into life on the inside. I can't ever tell with Crimethlnc if the author is real or made up, but truth has always been subjective so I suppose vagueness of who the author is can't be considered criticism. Pricey as far as 'zines go, but worth your buck as far as small press publications go. If you're interested in Crimethlnc, prison poetry, or a book snob, I would send for this right quick before it sells out. JM (Crimethlnc/PO Box 1963/Olympia, WA 98507)

THE STORY OF MY SCAB #7 4.25x5.5 \$1 32pgs

The review you're perusing includes more words and provides a better description of this 'zine than you're likely to find if you had it in front of you. See, the 'zine is really just a sketchbook. Which is great if you're gifted in the art of fabricating story lines for a random assortment of images that resemble characters from *Where The Wild Things Are*, because then you've found yourself a perfect match. If, however, you'd rather spend your dollar on paper that provides ideas expressed through written commentary, continue your search. You won't find it here. BL (William McCurtin/834 NE Church St./Portland, OR 97211)

SYNCOPATED #1 6x7 \$5 64pgs.

This collection of comics features newcomers as well as some more well known folks in the small 'zine/comic genre. Nate Powell, Ruben Bolling, Nick Bruel, Jen Sorenson, Ivan Brunetti, and a few others contributed to this project. It is a nicely cohesive project that has stories and styles which complement but are not the same. It was a good introduction to stuff I hadn't seen. This one is highly recommended for folks who like comics. LO (Nate Powell/7205 Geronimo/N Little Rock, AR 72116)

THE STUPID JOURNEY #3 5.5x4.25 \$2 50pgs.

This 'zine tells the story of Jonathan's stoned, sunburned, and solitary bike journey from Ottawa to Toronto. He describes a six (?) day journey in which he sees nature, visits small towns, and defies park permit laws. I liked how he juxtaposed the text on the left page with a photograph on the right. It has some really great photographs, but I wish they could have been clearer. Mostly excerpts from his diary, but strung together in an interesting narrative. Recommended to velophiles. JM (Satan McNugget/130 Clinton St. #27/Toronto, ON/M6G 2Y3Canada)

SUPERWAVE DREAMS #2 5.5x4.25 \$? 36pgs.

This poor guy, his life just isn't going too well. (Actually, that is an understatement.) In his 'zine you can read about some heartbreaking things he has had to deal with, and how he really isn't dealing all that well. *Superwave Dreams* does an excellent job of vocalizing a feeling of disorder, wonder, and despair in its honest personal pieces. You really feel for the guy when you read it, and that says a lot about the power of the things talked about here. The silver lining here is that Sweettooth has one heck of a powerful 'zine. Not much of a silver lining for him, but one all the same. I hope things start looking up for you. Thanks for sharing what has to be hard to express. LO (Sweettooth/543 Assembly/Fayetteville, AR 72701)

TWENTY- EIGHT PAGES LOVINGLY BOUND WITH TWINE #5 5.5x8.5 \$2 28pgs.

This is a very well-dope and thoughtfully put together personal 'zine out of Ohio. The writing style, sense of aesthetics, and even much of the content reminds the a lot of the work of my friend Rob (*The Rain Fell Last Night Made Me Fall In Love With You*, among other titles). The title of this 'zine says a lot, but to fill in the gaps, this features: a travel journal of a trip to an underground press conference, a very thorough review section, a short piece on racism, and lots of stuff about the author's kid. I personally have a low tolerance for that kinda thing, so consider yourself warned. Otherwise, this seems to be an intelligent, well-written, and above all sincere little publication. This one is very much above average; a 'zinester's 'zine for sure. TS (Christoph Meyer/PO Box 106/Danville, OH 43014)

TWOTHOUSANDTWO 6x7 \$? 26pgs.

This is a collection of journal entries that describe, often in excruciating detail, the tumultuous events of author Brian's life during the year 2002. Brian indulges in every variety of debauchery with abandon. He seems to survive mostly intact and closes by setting out on year 2003. Scattered throughout are quotes from Henry Rollins and Henry Miller, brief explanatory essays, prose ruminating on misogynist violence, and a collection of rather dark images. Good reading for those into heavy voyeurism. SJS (House Of Vlad Publishing/8608 NW 59th Ct./Tamarac, FL 33321)

VILE DOMINION #2 5.5x8.5 \$2 28pgs.

The second installment of *Vile Dominion* reads quickly. In about 10 minutes you can get updated on music and politics from Doug's perspective. Interviews with Hardcore Holocaust and Feast Or Famine, lots of reviews, reports from fests, political news, thoughts on getting older, and a few other rants fill most of the issue. You get a good dose of personality in each piece. I enjoyed his sense of humor and sarcasm. Fans of crust punk will find some interesting news and ideas about people and bands most relevant to that scene. Besides, they are bound to be instantly drawn in by the über-punk cover, complete with old english fonts and crazy looking folks. And the cover is just the beginning! LO (1970 Westwood Northern Blvd. #5/Cincinnati, OH 45225)

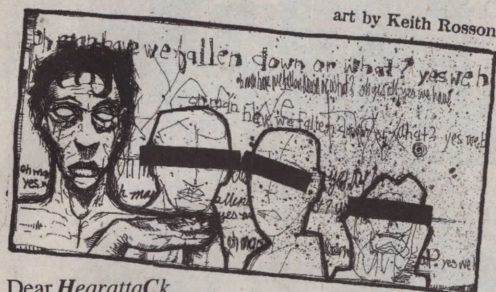
ZOO & MAX AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE 5.5x8.5 \$1 40pgs.

This is a collection of short comics made up of mostly 4 panel pieces. They are generally goofy jokes and one liners. The various characters are simply drawn black and white expressive images. Quite a few characters are defined in these pages through dialogue and drawing style. SJS (Timothy C. Kelly/105 Madison Ave. 6th Fl./New York, NY 10016)

OUR FAVORITES:
CHIHUAHUA AND
PITBULL #2 •
STEALING BABIES •
ANDY FRIENDLY
CALLS IN SICK •
CHICKENHEAD 'ZINE
AND ROLL #5 •
LICKIN' THE BEATERS
• SYNCOPATED #1 •
A WAY-SEEKING
MIND #1 • ROCK
OUT! • LEAPFROG #8

LETTERS TO HAC

prints to the interconnected culture



art by Keith Rosson

Dear *HeartattaCk*,

I am writing this letter in response to Hamish's well written submission from issue #36 concerning the bankruptcy of punk rock.

I agree. Punk has clearly been co-opted as a marketing ploy and commodified as a qualifier of transitory teenage cool. It is disheartening to go to a show and see weekend punx smirking and strutting around like high school jocks, where everyone knows the protocol: arrive, hang out and look cool until the band starts. Once they start, cross your arms and stand still. If you like the band, occasionally bob your head or tap your foot. Sneak furtive glances at everyone else, making note of various outfits, attitudes and poses to employ at the appropriate moment. Maybe if you have something to prove, jump in the mosh pit and flail around, convincing yourself with every pump of your fist that this is the apex of rebellion.

But I know this isn't all punk rock is. I figure my story is fairly common. I got into punk about 6 years ago, when I was 14. Bought some records, formed some bands and went to some shows. My senior year of high school I just kind of drifted away. With my future looming high on the horizon and my imminent departure from high school, punk had come to look like, well, high school. I still bust out my Submission Hold record or Crimpshrine tape now and again, but I groan at the thought of going to a show, and "punk," that four letter label that burned into my skull, that I would have killed to be called by my peers, just doesn't fucking matter anymore.

By all accounts I am just another casualty of punk's mid-nineties commercial renaissance (or is it colonization?). Yet there is one respect in which I differ. At 14, with all the requisite Dead Kennedys and NOFX albums came something else: the fabled bible MRR. At first I didn't know how or where to get them, so I would pour over the couple issues that I had, noting all the details—the common historical references, the slang, Mykel Board's penis, etc. But I can't ever recall talking to another punk about something he or she had read in MRR. I am instinctually reluctant to dichotomize like this, but through the pages of MRR I saw punk as a complex cultural network with an incredibly rich history. I couldn't wait to find someone who would examine, analyze and expound on it with me. By contrast, everyone else seemed to have a fairly impoverished notion of punk: a vulgar collection of superficial symbols stolen by the Market and sold back to the kids at an exorbitant cultural price.

There were of course, exceptions. There was the time the Oi! band the Garage Rats

came down, and the singer stripped off most his clothing and square danced with everyone at the show. The emotional connection was palpable, and let me tell you, until you have seen a big scary lookin skin do the do 'se do, well, you just have not lived. Then there was the time that kids in the next town south organized their own show at the local skate park. When the manager reneged and refused to let the bands play, 30 kids or so crowded into the front of the place and respectfully negotiated with him. When he still refused, everyone started swarming around the front of the place, lighting things on fire and jumping over them with their skateboards. The manager called the police, who started hitting and verbally assaulting everyone and stuffing them in squad cars. The violence with which they cracked down belied their fear and served to highlight just how powerful public social unrest can be.

These were the highlights though. Had I felt these connections more often perhaps I'd be getting ready for a show right now, instead staring at a screen and typing. However, these instances *did* communicate the actual existence of beautiful, moving, punk-fucking rock.

I never stopped reading MRR, and then I found *Cometbus, Slug and Lettuce*, and of course, *HeartattaCk*. This was the literature that nurtured my political consciousness. I probably learned more from Lefty Hooligan than all my high school history teachers put together. Since then, I've read and read up on feminism, Marx, anarchist theory, post-structuralism, and all of these things have enriched my perspective. I'm aware of my privilege as a white person, as a male, as an American (as if it's not painfully obvious). I understand that you cannot fight racism by carefully sewing an anti-Nazi patch on a bag probably made by sweatshop labor anyway. It's gratifying to know that in certain ways this critical perspective elicits respect, and maybe, to some degree, qualifies as "punk."

The only thing I would contend is that when you reject punk's current commercial incarnation, you are relinquishing its history. There is a reason punk survived through the eighties after its initial explosion. There is a reason that it will survive after it once again ceases to become profitable. There is something about the culture, the thrill of a great show, the passion of a great record, the intimacy of a great 'zine that *does* nurture political and social consciousness. Initially filtering politics through culture is a solid strategy for social change. Firstly, it prevents overt indoctrination; people come to the culture of their own free will by something that appeals to them, like music, for example. Secondly, it equips people as proactive agents in their own right; How can a man in this society, for example, know what it's like to talk to a woman as an equal until he has been in positions to do so? The informality of punk institutions works like a set of tools, whereby each person has opportunity to develop his or her proclivities and possibly enact them. Try finding that in some Marxist vanguard party or even in the depoliticized indie rock scene. Finally, punk

of politics and culture and its importance in alternative social configurations. As Jesse Michaels said: "Music is an indirect force for change, because it provides an anchor against human tragedy in this sense. It works towards a reconciled world. It can also be the direct experience of change. at certain points during some shows the reconciled world is already here at least in that second in that place..."

C'mon, would we really have a representative democracy in punktopia?

I am not saying punk is our ticket to grace, far from it. All I am saying is that it has a unique history of articulating an effective culture of resistance. That is worth fighting for and preserving, despite its desperately maligned current situation.

I am actually looking to develop a project that examines just that. How does the culture of punk politicize its participants? Why do mohawks and Marxism go together? I would love to hear any insights on this connection, especially those of you who have been in the scene for a while. If you are interested, please e-mail me at SkaTone16@aol.com. Thanks for taking the time to read this.

—Mike

Hello *HeartattaCk* 'zine,

This letter is for Eric, author of the "Pitching at Inclines" column in issue #37. Eric, oh wait I'm sorry, XericX, XXX, X, hint, hint, I'm straight edge Eric decided to make it his personal duty to attack the CrimethInc column. In this dutifully written piece he targets the collective's stance, or lack of stance, on hypocrisy and violent tactics. He calls the stance on hypocrisy, well, I guess hypocritical. And refers to violent tactics such as looting and destruction of private property as counter-productive and thuggish. He also criticizes several specific wordings. Very well in fact, by means of printing the quoted material completely out of context. Hey Eric, you don't get it. You never will. Maybe I'll see you holding a homemade sign at a peace rally sometime soon, but I hate to tell you that you're never gonna see change in your life, not even for one magical day. It's a shame.

I dunno what world you're living in, but from where I stand this is a fucking war. Pacifism topples no regime, no reign of terror. Direct action is the only way.

—J.

For more on this topic from both *CrimethInc* and Eric, see this issue's *CrimethInc* column.—Leslie

heartattack

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SEVERED HEAD OF STATE - No Love... CD	A
YAPHET KOTTO - Syncopated... CD	G
YAPHET KOTTO - Syncopated... LP	J
YAPHET KOTTO - The Killer Was... CD	F
YAPHET KOTTO - The Killer Was... LP	H
STRUGGLE - One Settler, One Bullet CD	G
SEVERED HEAD OF STATE - discography CD	G
COUNTDOWN TO PUTSCH - CD/Book	M
SUBMISSION HOLD - Sackcloth and Ashes LP	J
SUBMISSION HOLD - Sackcloth and Ashes CD	G
THIS MACHINE KILLS - Death In The... LP	H
THIS MACHINE KILLS - Death In The... CD	G
SUBMISSION HOLD - Waiting For... LP	J
SUBMISSION HOLD - Waiting For... CD	G
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ORCHID - Chaos Is Me LP	H
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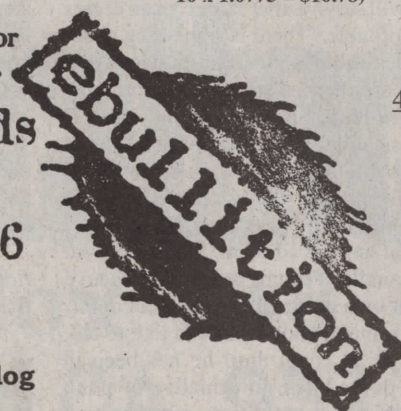
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